Shojo Beat Manga

BABY & Me

Story & Art by

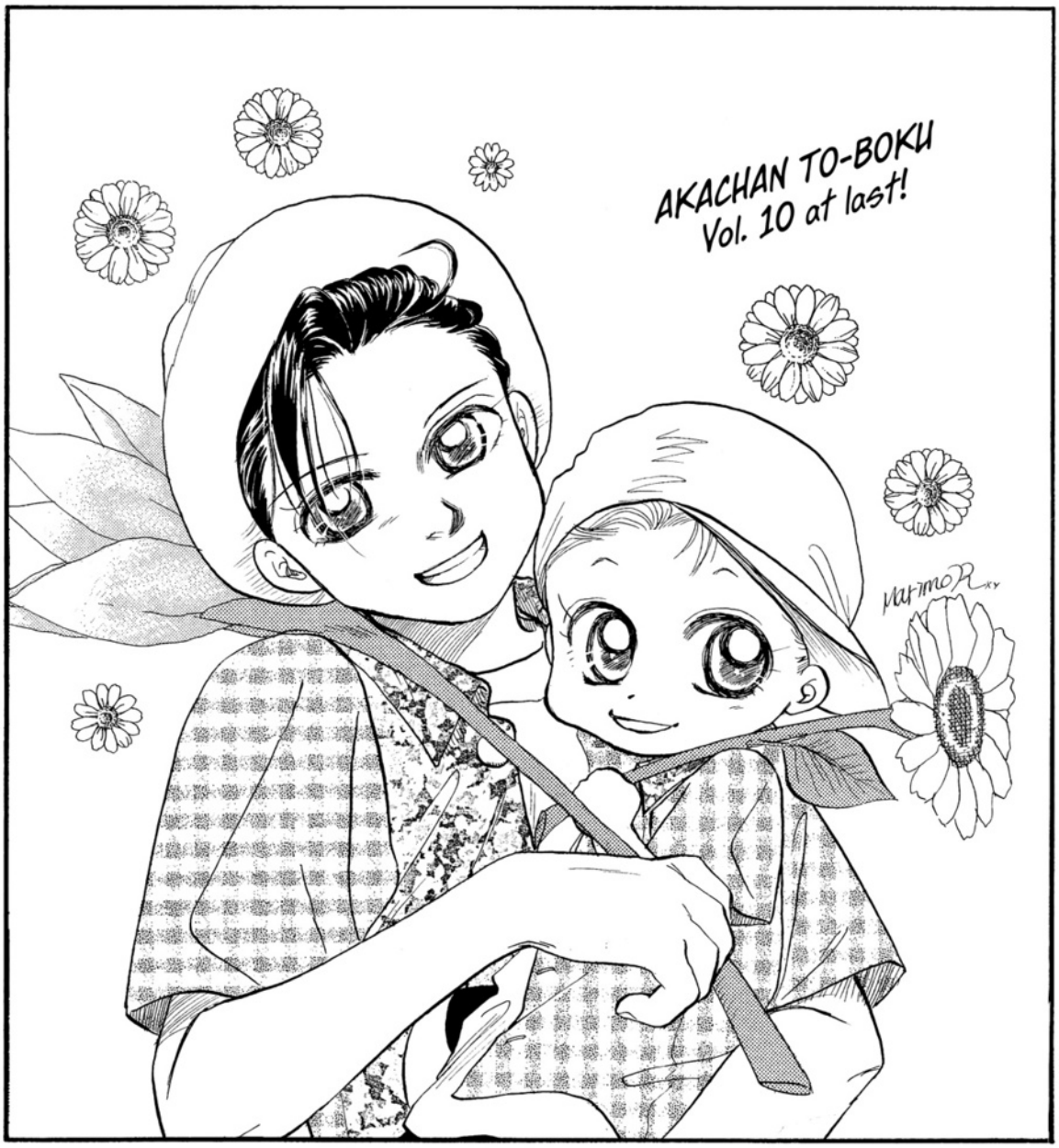
Marimo Ragawa

10

Shojo Beat

BABY & Me

Vol. 10

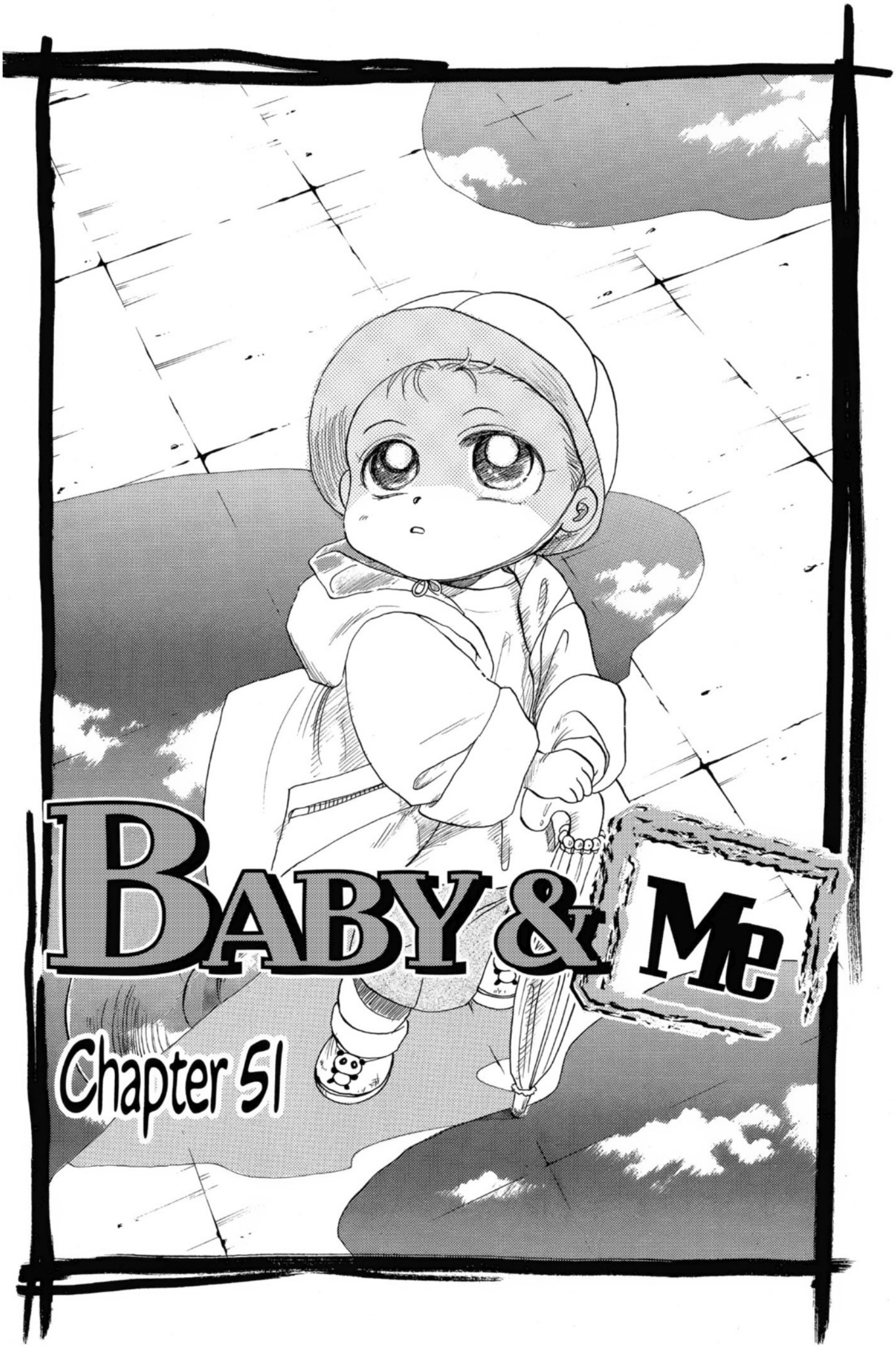


Story & Art by **Marimo Ragawa**

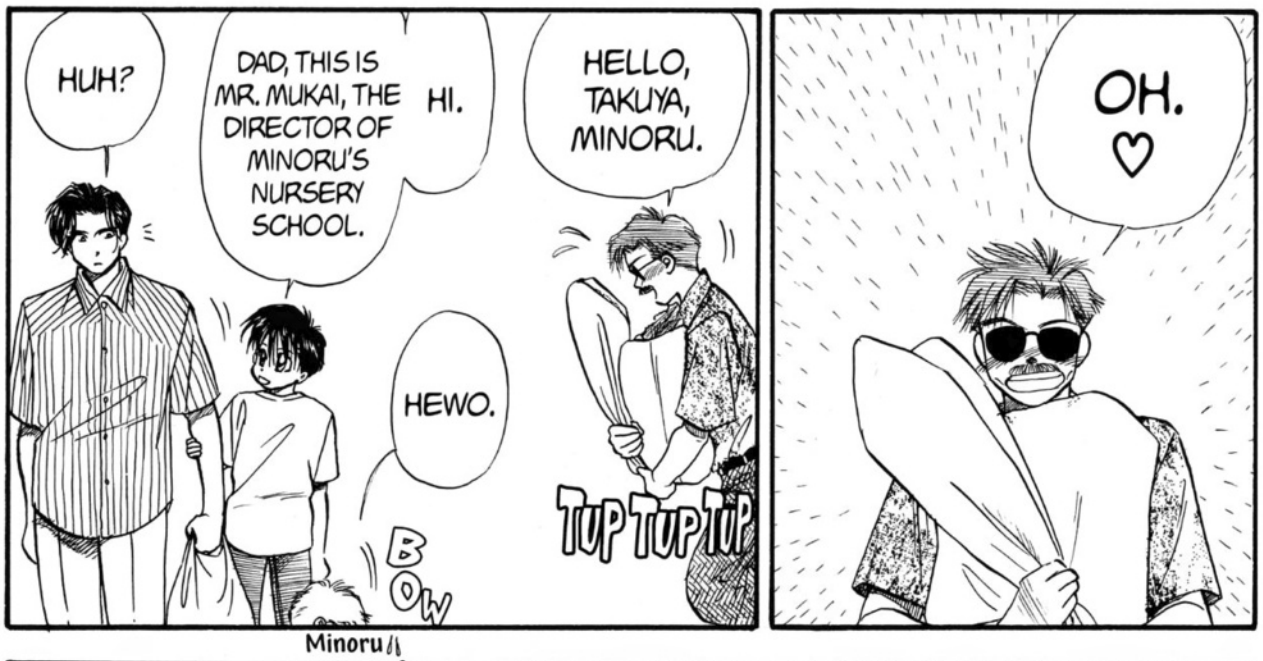
BABY & ME

Table of Contents

Chapter 51	5
Chapter 52	35
Chapter 53	65
Chapter 54	95
Chapter 55	125
Chapter 56	156
Marimo Ragawa's Let Me Draw What I Want!	189


BABY & Me
Chapter 51

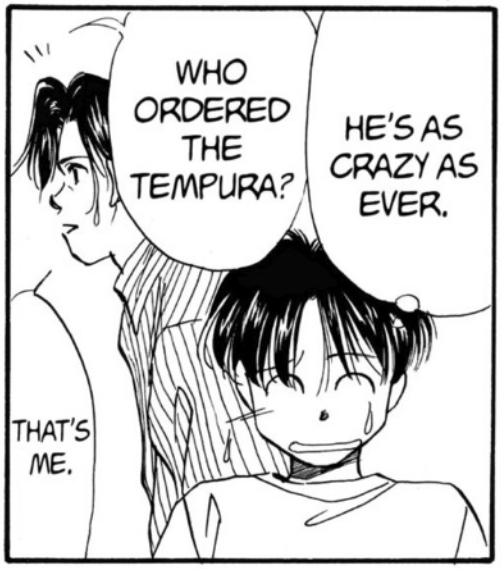
SNIFF!
AHHH...
WHAT A LOVELY FRA-GRANCE.
MISS ...
I'D LIKE FIVE OF THESE, PLEASE.
HE'S A STRANGE MAN.
HUM
HUM
DIERU
OH.
UBB...
WUNN
WUNN
DIRECTOR OF THE KUMANOI CITY SUNFLOWER NURSERY SCHOOL NO.2...
...MR. YOJI MUKAI.

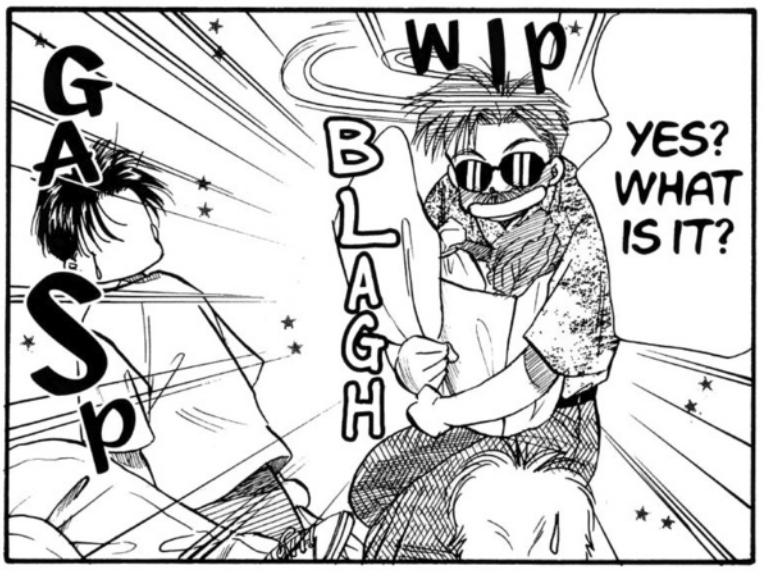

HUH?
DAD, THIS IS MR. MUKAI, THE DIRECTOR OF MINORU'S NURSERY SCHOOL.
HI.
HELLO, TAKUYA, MINORU.
HEWO.
BOW
TUP TUP TUP
OH. ♡

Minoru
AH...

IT'S MY PLEA-SURE.
NOT AT ALL.
DOOM

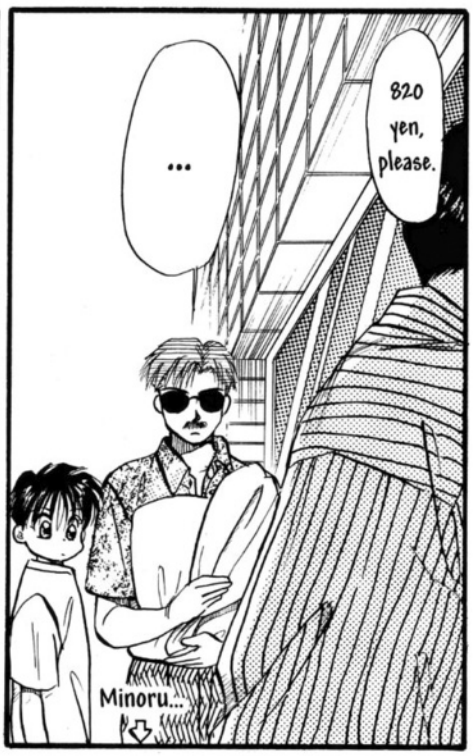
HELLO.
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU. THANK YOU FOR TAKING SUCH GOOD CARE OF MINORU.

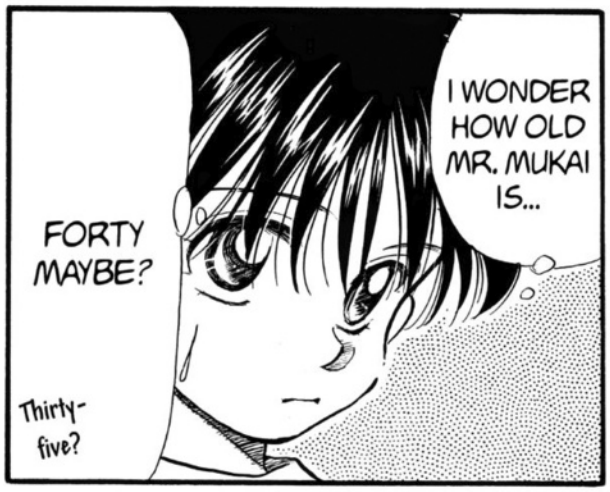

WHO ORDERED THE TEMPURA?
HE'S AS CRAZY AS EVER.
THAT'S ME.


GASp
WIP
BLAGH
YES? WHAT IS IT?

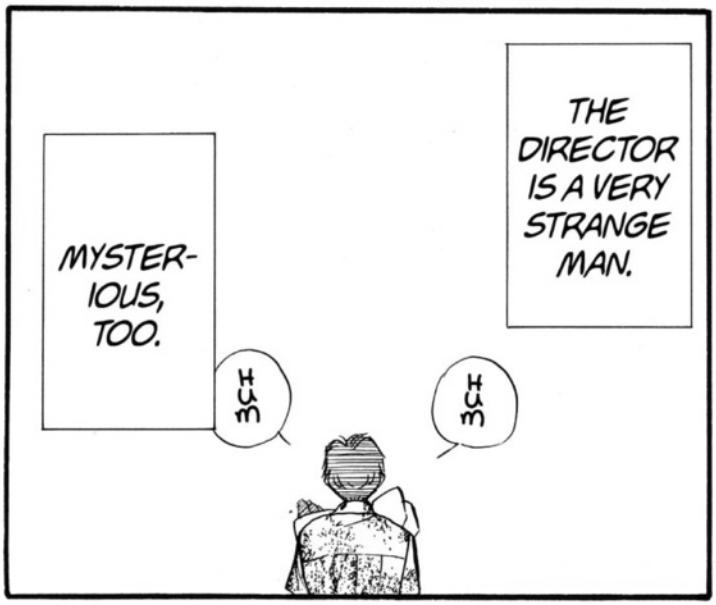
WHAT ?!
WHY, HE CAN'T BE MUCH OLDER THAN I AM.

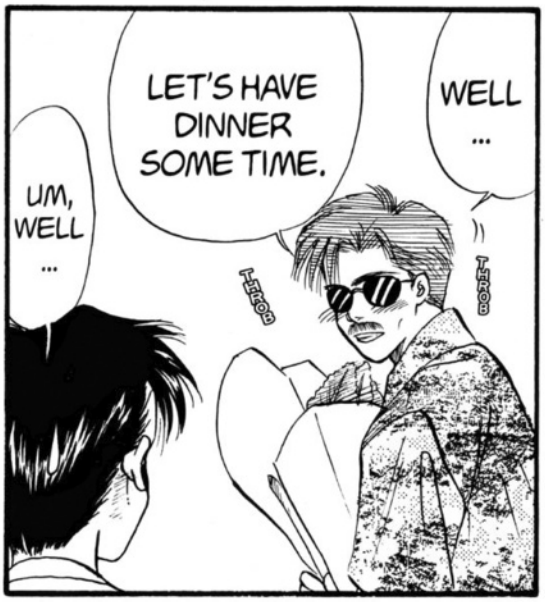
REALLY?
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE HE'S ALREADY GOT TWO KIDS.
YOUR FATHER'S VERY YOUNG.

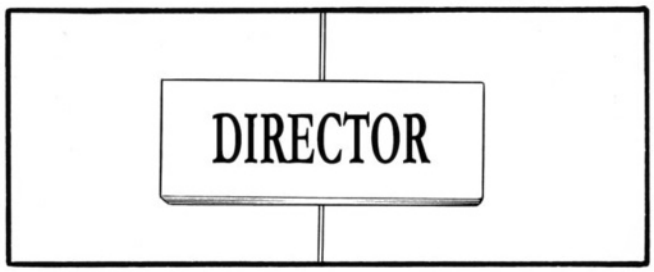

...
820 yen, please.
Minoru...

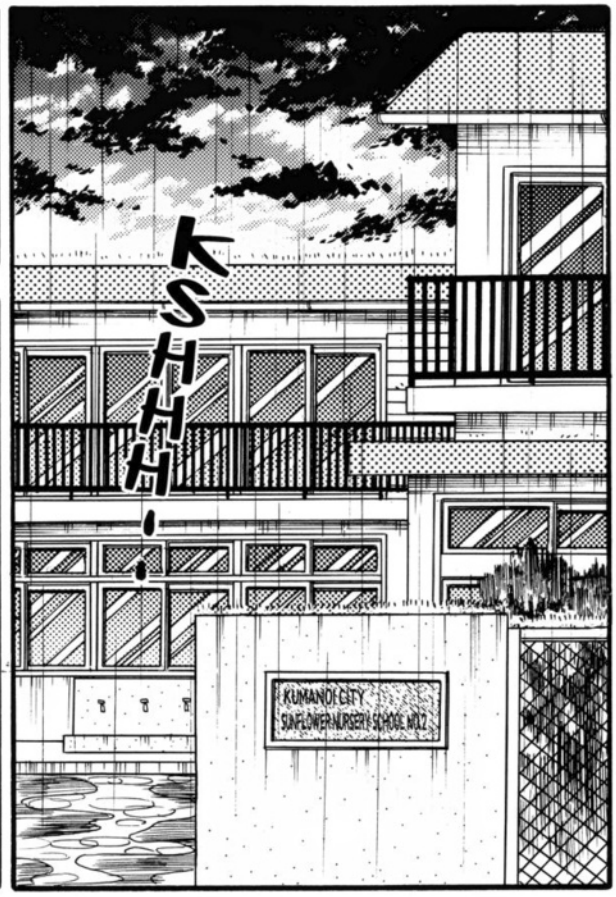

I WONDER HOW OLD MR. MUKAI IS...
FORTY MAYBE?
Thirty-five?

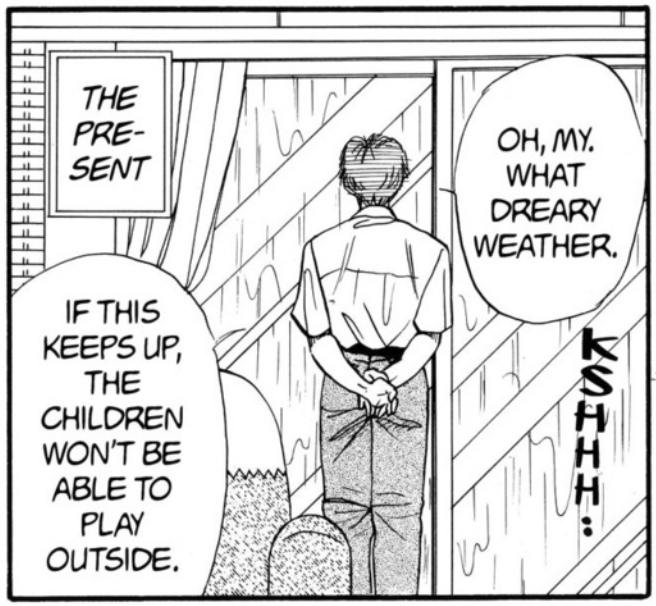
WHAT ?
UH... NOTHING ...
SWIP
SWIP


THE DIRECTOR IS A VERY STRANGE MAN.
MYSTERIOUS, TOO.
HUM
HUM


WELL ...
LET'S HAVE DINNER SOME TIME.
UM, WELL ...
THROB
THROB


DIRECTOR


KSHHH...
KUMANO CITY
SUNFLOWER NURSERY SCHOOL NO.2


THE PRE-SENT
OH, MY. WHAT DREARY WEATHER.
KSHHH.
IF THIS KEEPS UP, THE CHILDREN WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY OUTSIDE.

AS DIREC-TOR HERE...
...THE CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS IS MY HIGHEST PRIORITY.

AH-HA!
I HAVE AN IDEA.
THWAP

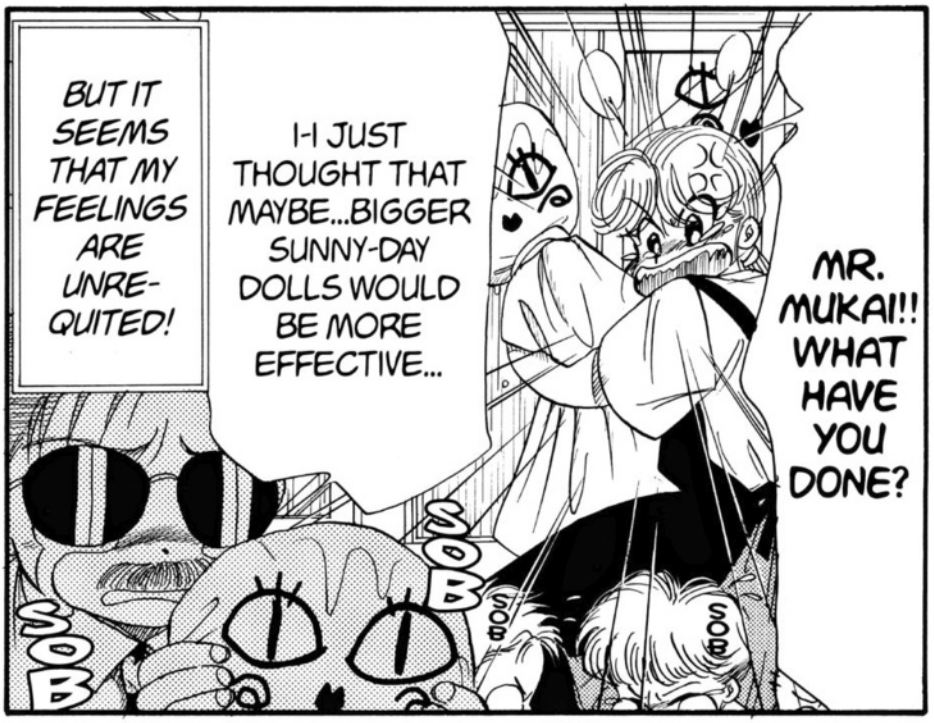
I'LL GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO MAKE THEM HAPPY.
BEHOLD !!
THWUSH

*Handmade dolls that are supposed to bring good weather.

Author's Note: Part 1

Hello, Marimo Ragawa here. *Baby and Me* has reached ten volumes!

Some people have commented sarcastically that this series has turned into *Co-Stars and Me*. But what's wrong with that? I can't help it if the supporting cast is popular. "Do more with Fujii!!" "I want more of Director Mukai!!" "I love the Kimura family!!" Or do you just want to read about Takuya and Minoru chapter after chapter? Readers would think I was in a rut if I did that. And no one would buy my manga then! It was rude of that person to write me and say, "Get your act together!" So this is my question for this year: What's wrong with *Co-Stars and Me*? Absolutely nothing. The End.



PFFT

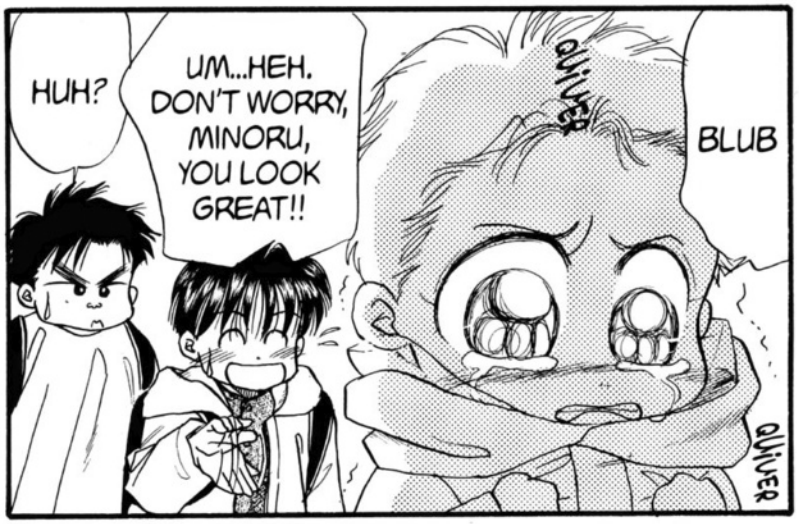
WE GO SPWISH-SPWASH IN DA WAIN?
KEEP YOUR CHIN UP.
WUNN
UMPH ...
WUNN

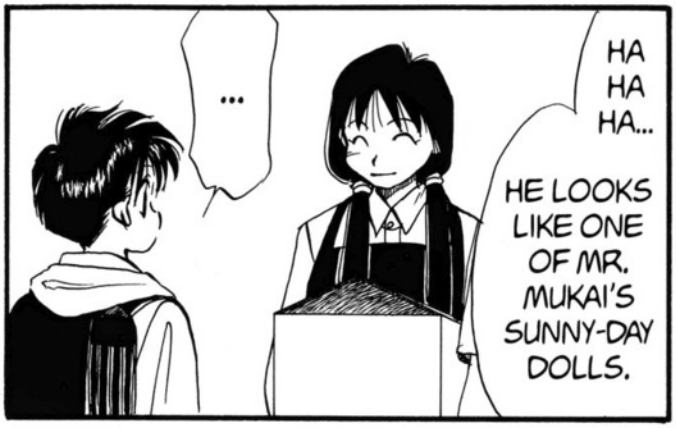
KSHHH!!

WHAT'S WITH THAT STUPID OUTFIT?! YOU LOOK LIKE A SUNNY-DAY DOLL!! OR—OR A SNOWMAN!!
MINO-RU!
GUA HA HA HA

?
BUT I'M TRYING NOT TO LAUGH.
HE LOOKS... RIDICU-LOUS...
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE HIM FEEL BAD.
HE'H...

WHAT A CUTE RAIN-COAT YOU HAVE ON.
OH, MINORU ...

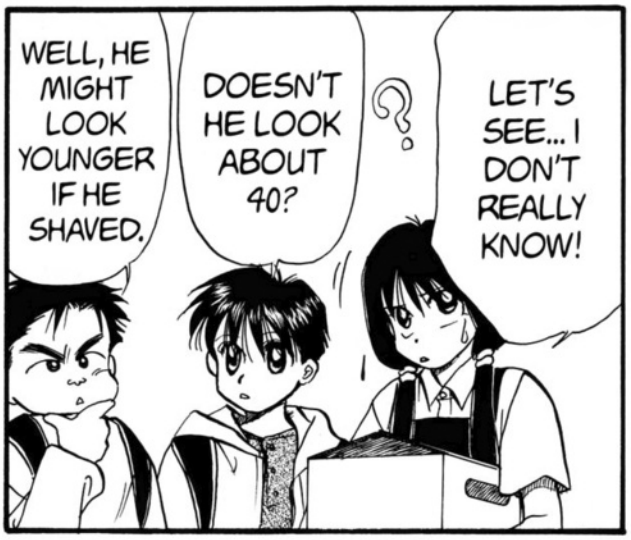

HUH?
UM...HEH. DON'T WORRY, MINORU, YOU LOOK GREAT!!
QUIVER
BLUB
QUIVER

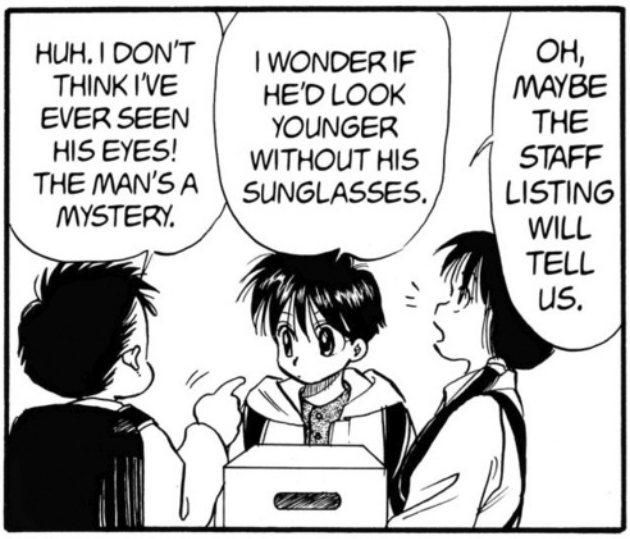

HA HA HA...
HE LOOKS LIKE ONE OF MR. MUKAI'S SUNNY-DAY DOLLS.
...

SEE, MINORU? SHE SAID IT'S CUTE.
IT'S REALLY RAINING OUT THERE...
...SO BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY HOME.
YEAH ...

UM... HOW OLD IS MR. MUKAI?

HUH?

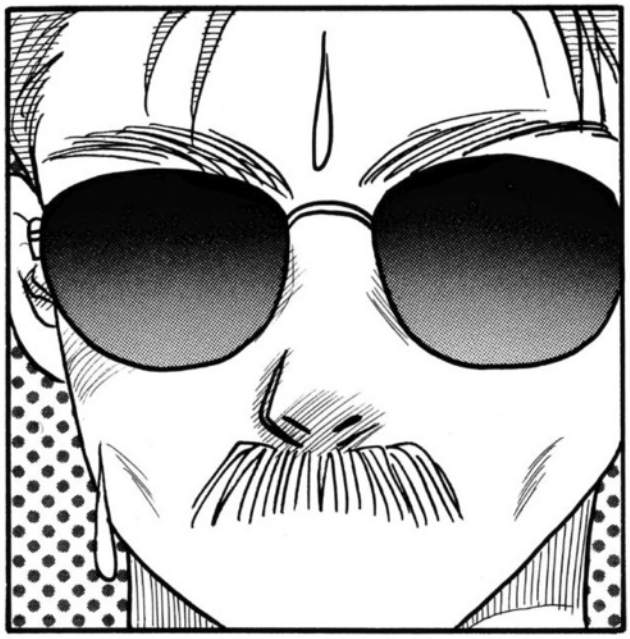

LET'S SEE... I DON'T REALLY KNOW!
DOESN'T HE LOOK ABOUT 40?
WELL, HE MIGHT LOOK YOUNGER IF HE SHAVED.

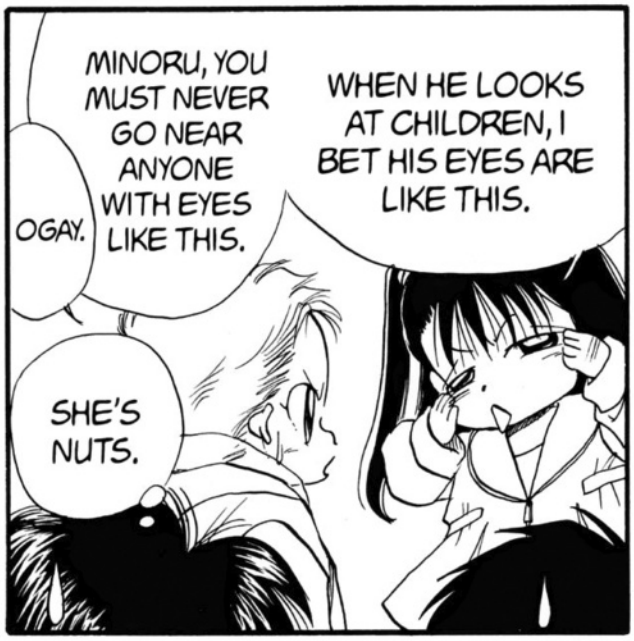

OH, MAYBE THE STAFF LISTING WILL TELL US.
I WONDER IF HE'D LOOK YOUNGER WITHOUT HIS SUNGLASSES.
HUH. I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN HIS EYES! THE MAN'S A MYSTERY.

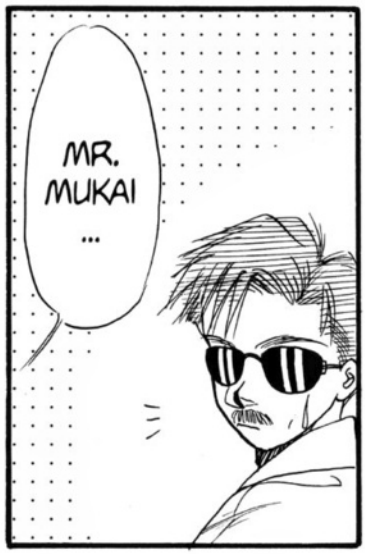
YOU KNOW WHAT?
STRETCH
I BET THEY LOOK LIKE THIS!

NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM. BUT THE DIRECTOR ...
...IS CRAZY ABOUT LITTLE KIDS.
WHAT, ICHIKA?
YOU SAW THEM?

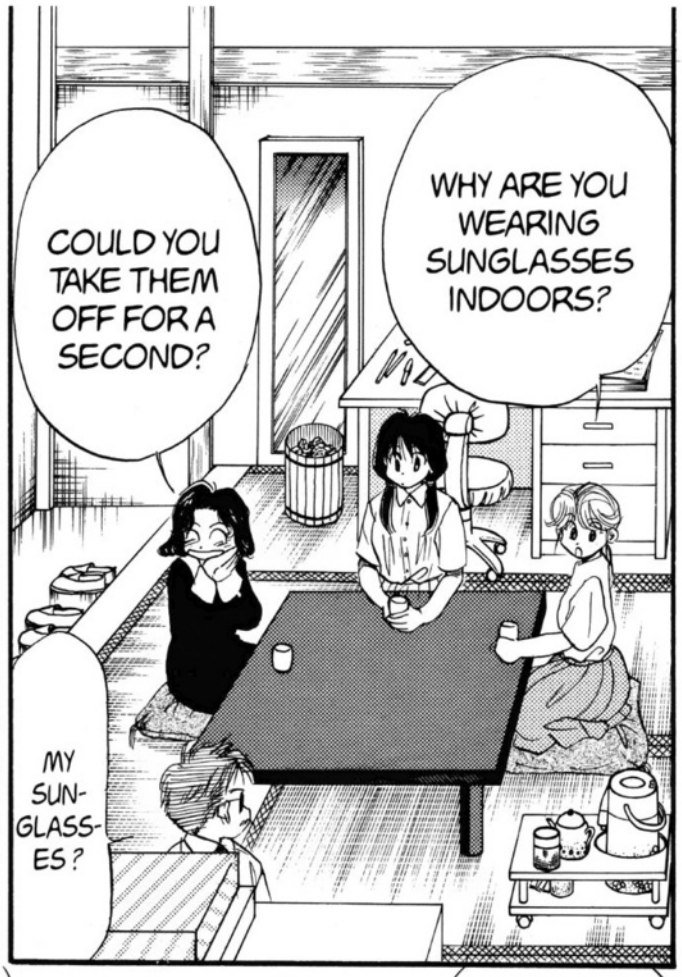
WHEN DID SHE GET HERE?
ICHIKA ...




MINORU, YOU MUST NEVER GO NEAR ANYONE WITH EYES LIKE THIS.
OGAY.
WHEN HE LOOKS AT CHILDREN, I BET HIS EYES ARE LIKE THIS.
SHE'S NUTS.


MR. MUKAI ...

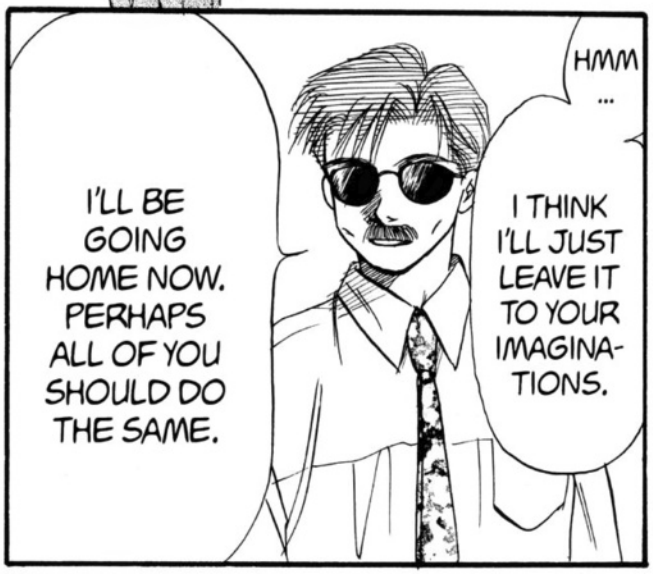
STARE...
WHY ARE THE TEACHERS LOOKING AT ME SO STRANGELY?



SAY, MR. MUKAI, HOW OLD ARE YOU, ANYWAY?

WHO, ME?

HOW OLD DO I LOOK?



THE STAFF LIST!!
TMP TMP TMP

KLIK...
HE THINKS ...
...THAT HE'S SIDE-STEPPED US.

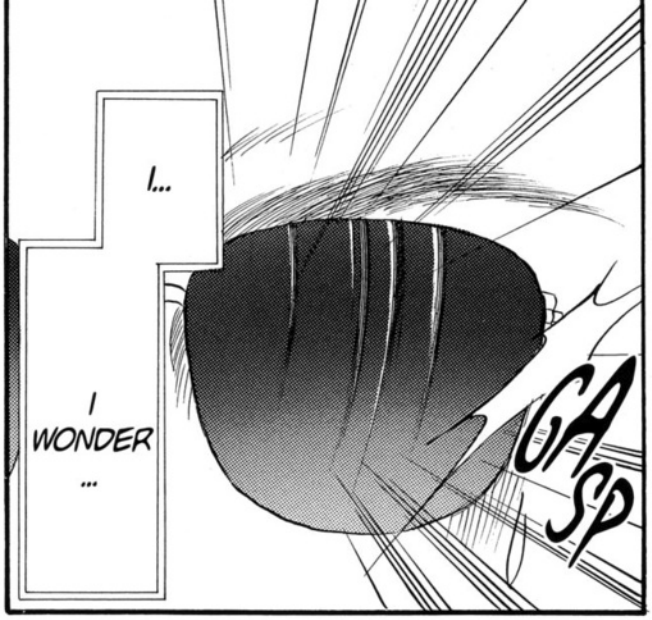
WELL ...
...GOOD-BYE, EVERY-ONE.
WOOSH

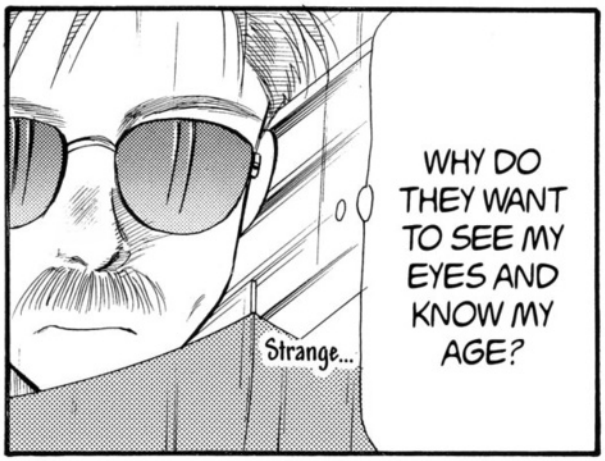
STRANGE ...
KSHHH:
KLIK

SOME-BODY...
... SPILLED INK ON THE PAGE.
It was right here.

HE'S GOT TO BE 54.
HERE IT IS.
NO, HE'S IN HIS FORTIES.

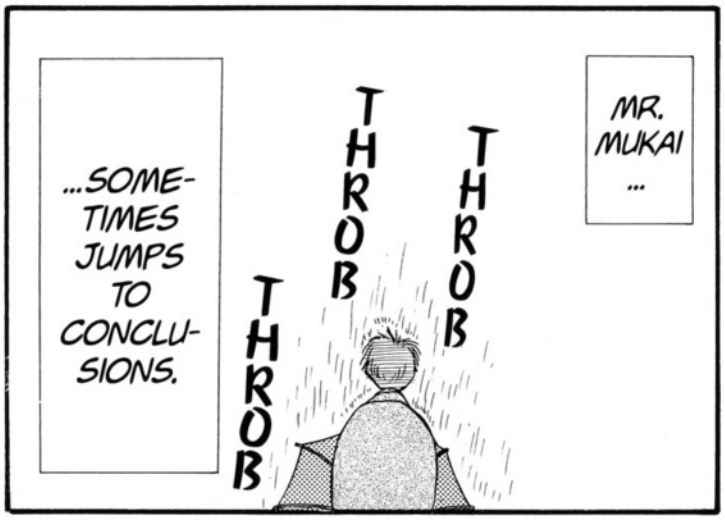
...

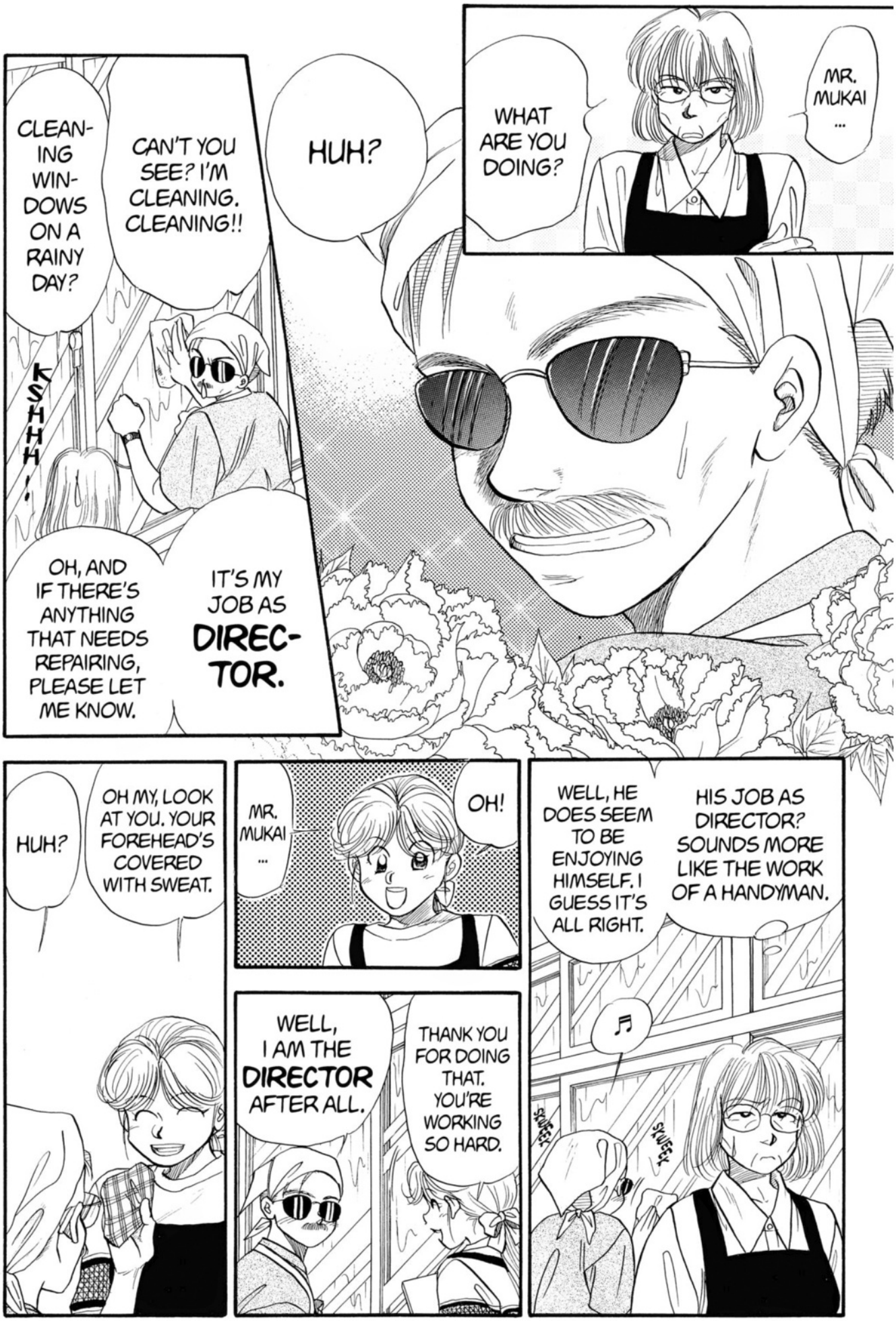

I...
I WONDER ...
GASP


WHY DO THEY WANT TO SEE MY EYES AND KNOW MY AGE?
Strange...

DO THEY THINK I'M A BAD DIRECTOR?
DOOOM

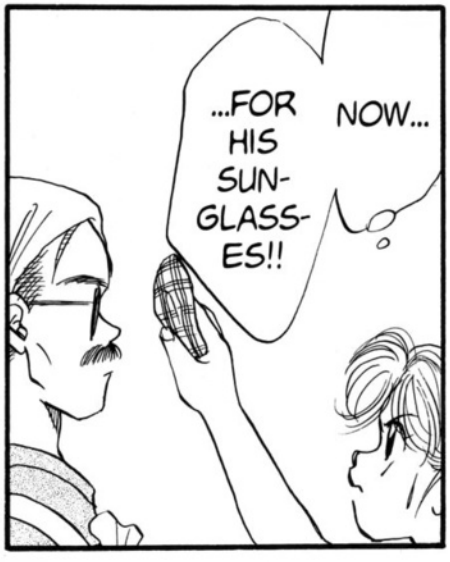
THE NEXT DAY...
KSHHH!


MR. MUKAI ...
THROB
THROB
THROB
...SOMETIMES JUMPS TO CONCLUSIONS.

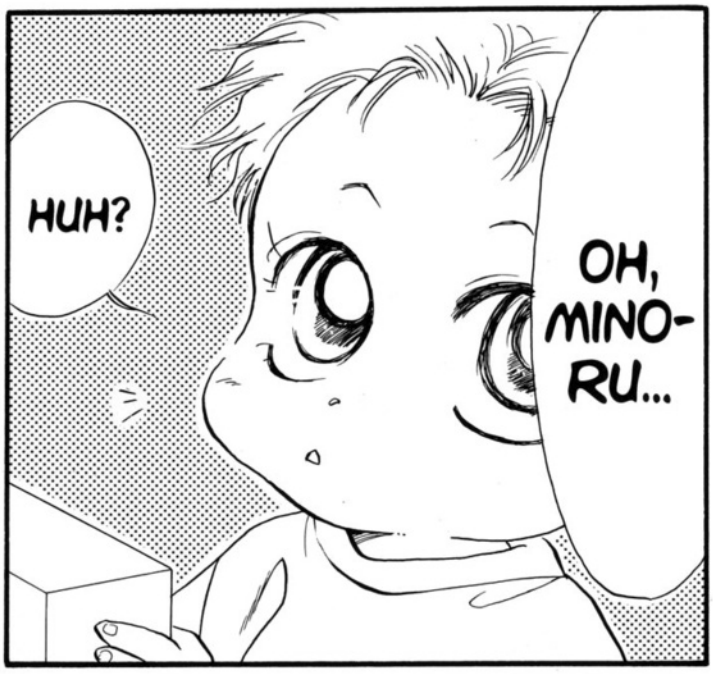

MR. MUKAI ...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HUH?
CAN'T YOU SEE? I'M CLEANING. CLEANING!!
CLEANING WINDOWS ON A RAINY DAY?
KSHHH!
IT'S MY JOB AS DIRECTOR.
OH, AND IF THERE'S ANYTHING THAT NEEDS REPAIRING, PLEASE LET ME KNOW.
OH!
MR. MUKAI ...
HUH?
OH MY, LOOK AT YOU. YOUR FOREHEAD'S COVERED WITH SWEAT.
THANK YOU FOR DOING THAT. YOU'RE WORKING SO HARD.
WELL, I AM THE DIRECTOR AFTER ALL.
HIS JOB AS DIRECTOR? SOUNDS MORE LIKE THE WORK OF A HANDYMAN.
WELL, HE DOES SEEM TO BE ENJOYING HIMSELF. I GUESS IT'S ALL RIGHT.
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE

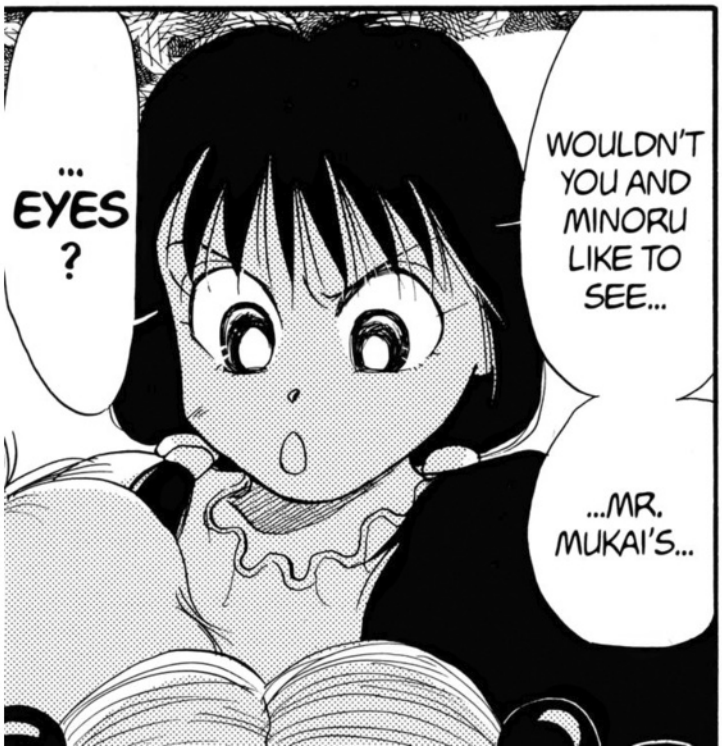
P-PLEASE DON'T BOTHER ME.
HE STAR-TLED ME...
HA HA HA
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP

HEY !!
GULP

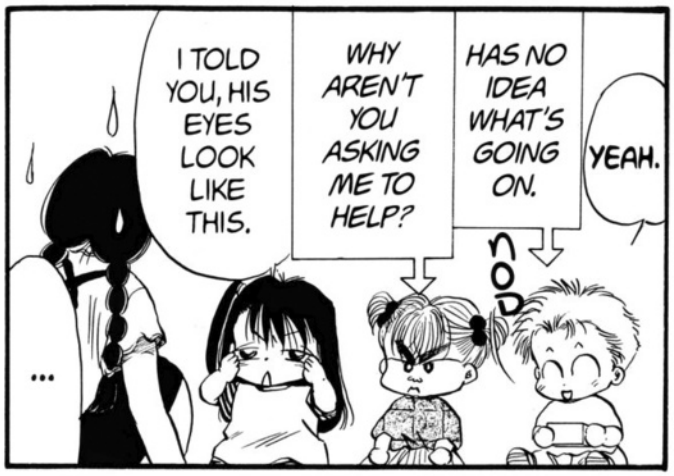

NOW...
...FOR HIS SUN-GLASS-ES!!

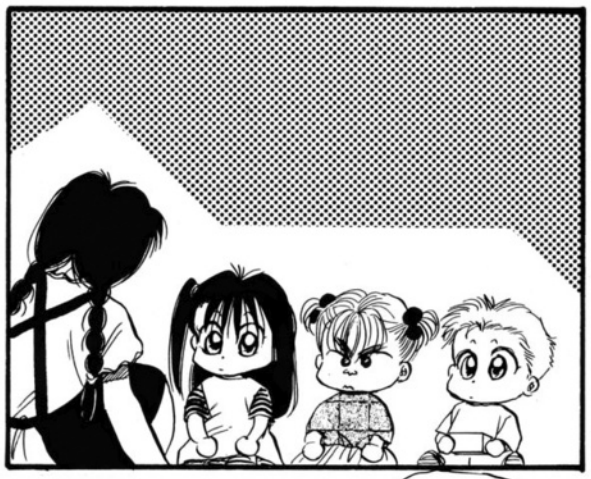
I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK YOU, MINORU.
TEACHER, MINORU'S PLAYING WITH US. DON'T TAKE HIM AWAY NOW.
YEAH.
Uh...

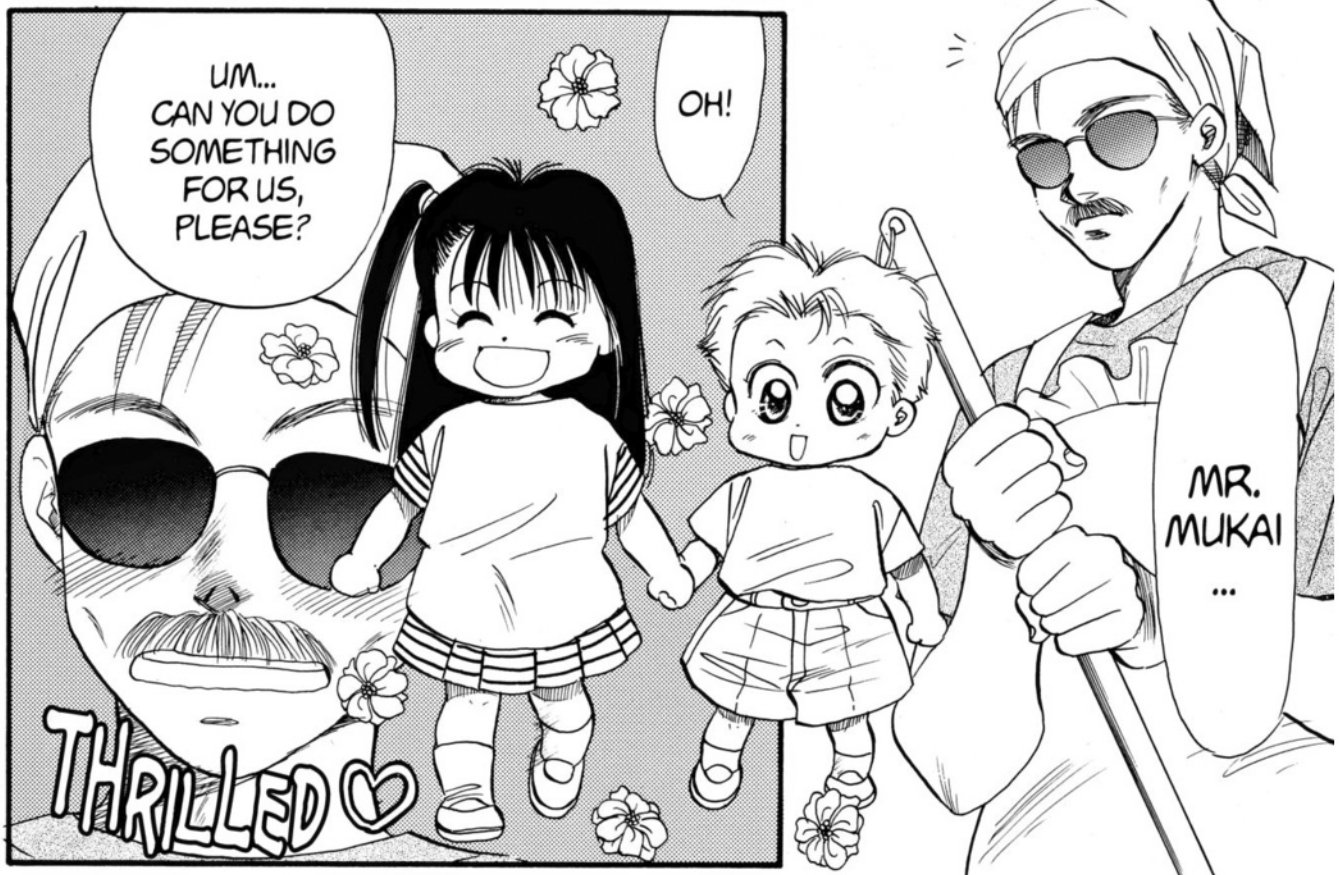

OH, MINO-RU...
HUH?


WOULDN'T YOU AND MINORU LIKE TO SEE...
...MR. MUKAI'S...
... EYES ?

ICHIKA ...
YES?
THE DIRECTOR LIKES YOU A LOT, TOO, DOESN'T HE?


I TOLD YOU, HIS EYES LOOK LIKE THIS.
WHY AREN'T YOU ASKING ME TO HELP?
HAS NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON.
YEAH.
nod
...




UM... CAN YOU DO SOMETHING FOR US, PLEASE?
OH!
MR. MUKAI ...
THRILLED ♡

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE.
HUH?

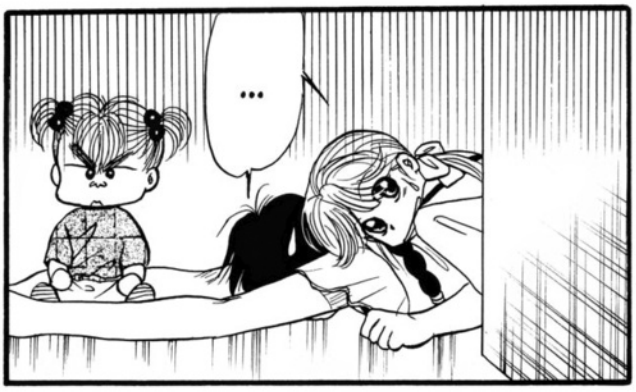
WHAT IS IT, CHIL-DREN ?
BUMP
BUMP
WELL ...
THROB
THROB

WELL, MAYBE JUST FOR A SECOND, THEN.
S-STOP PUSHING! I'M GOING IN...
NUDGE

COME ON! JUST TAKE THEM OFF!!
OH, NO. THESE ARE MY TRADE-MARK.
NO.
NO.
DON'T YOU LIKE MY GLAS-SES?
NUDGE
NUDGE

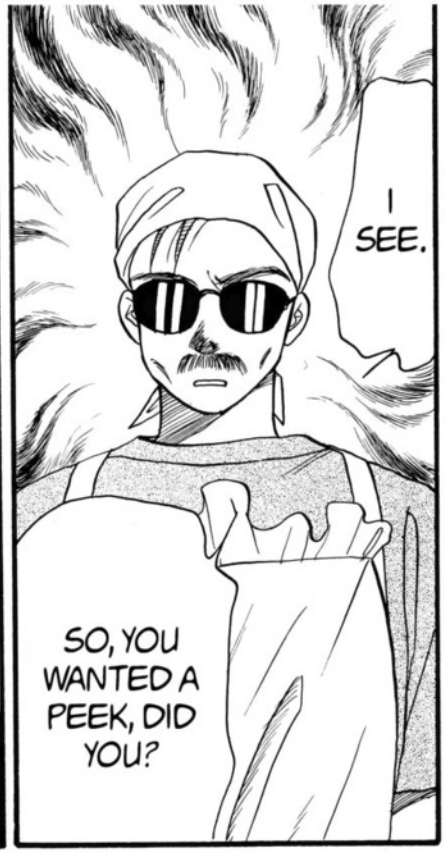
TAKE OFF THOSE BLACK GLASSES.
YOU MEAN ...
THESE ?

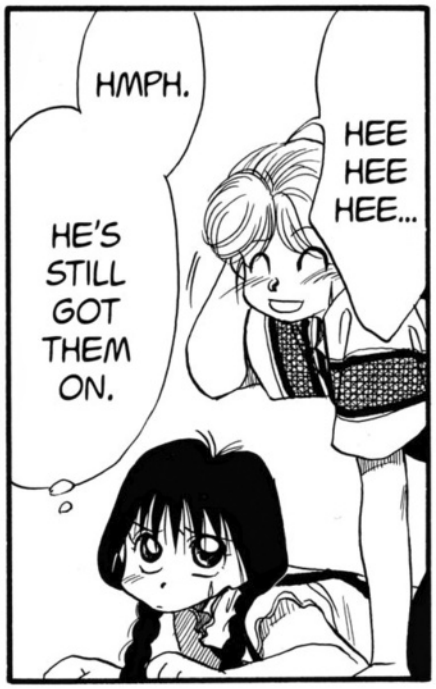
...

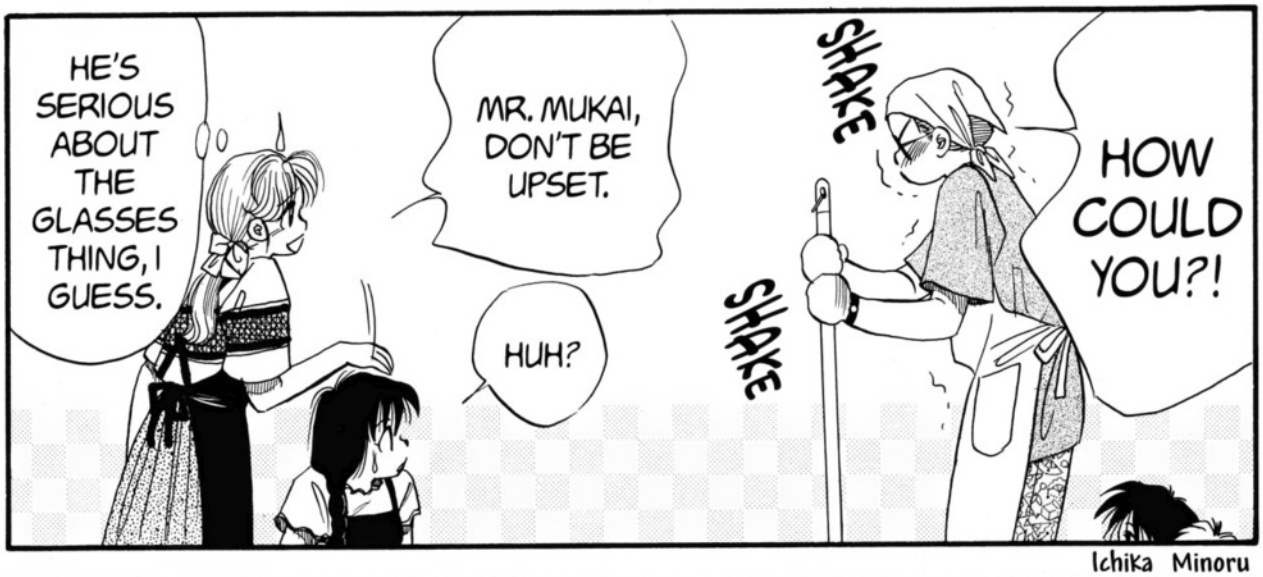

...

...

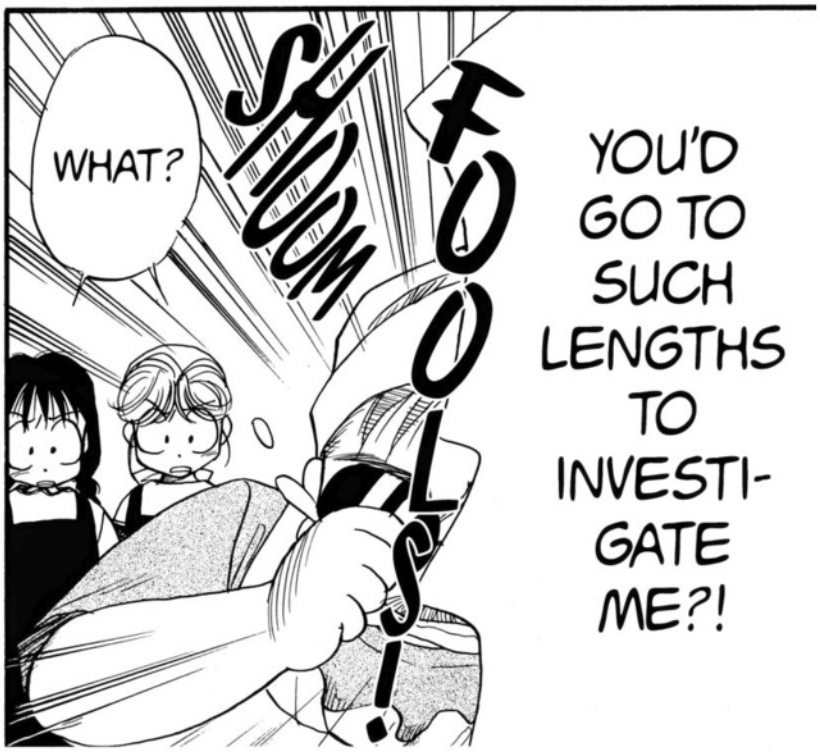
HMPH ...
EEEK!
THUMP



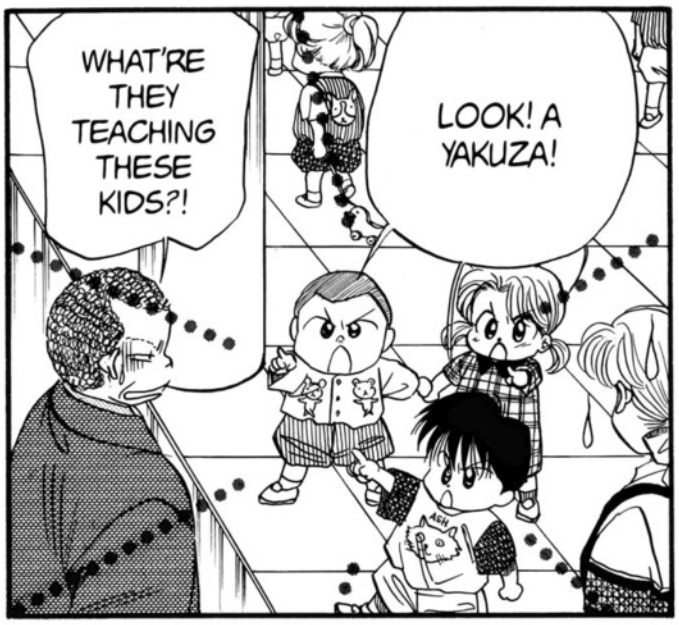


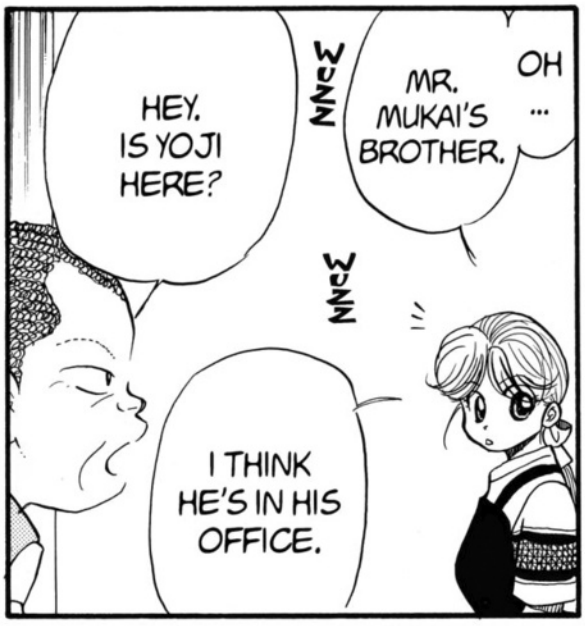


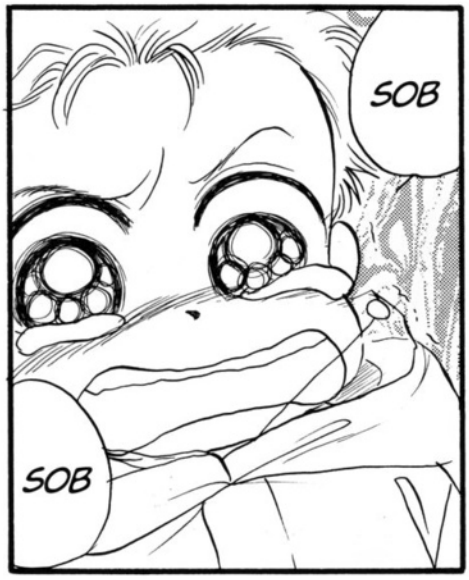
Ichika Minoru



I LOVE THE CHILDREN SO MUCH!!
I...
THIS IS INTOLERABLE.
HOW COULD THEY?
...ALSO HAS A HISTORY OF PARANOIAC DELUSIONS.
Crying →
BOO-HOO!!
MR. MUKAI ...
KSSS
KSSS
IMP
IMP
WHAT A DUMP.
THAT YOJI ...
WHY DOESN'T HE HAVE IT RENOVATED?
IMP
IMP
BREAD


WHAT'RE THEY TEACHING THESE KIDS?!
LOOK! A YAKUZA!


HEY. IS YOJI HERE?
WUZZ
MR. MUKAI'S BROTHER.
OH ...
WUZZ
I THINK HE'S IN HIS OFFICE.

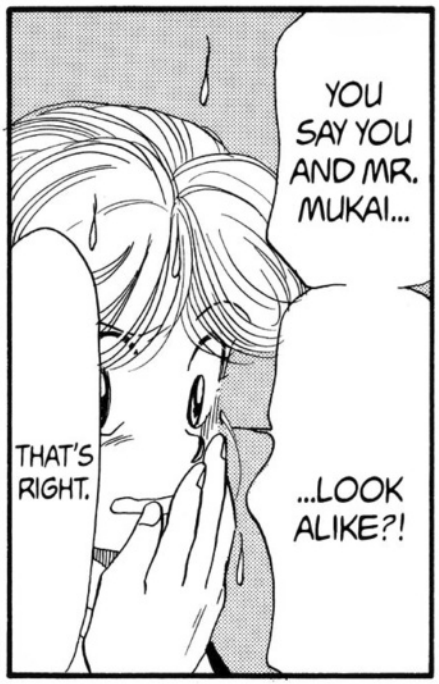

SOB
SOB

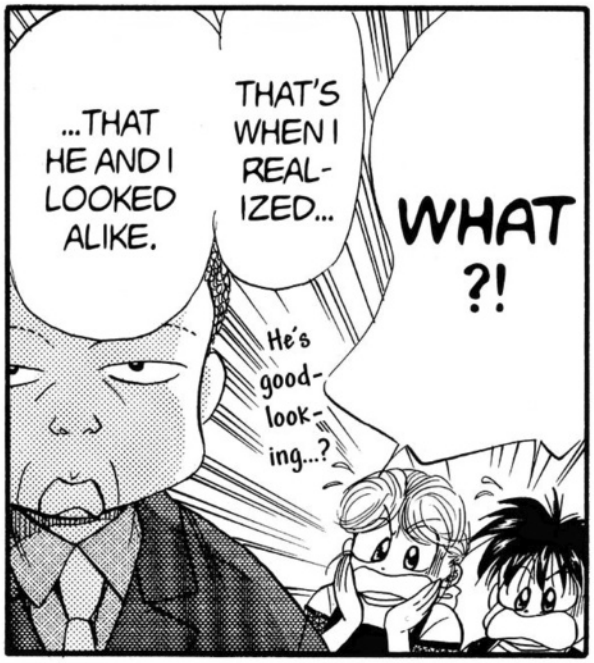
...
...?
TUP
TUP

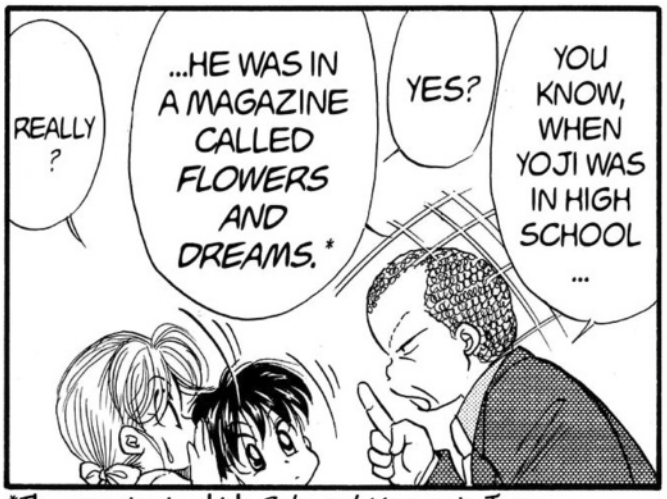
HUH?

WELL ?!
WE LOOK ALIKE, DON'T WE?
YOU, THERE. TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT ME. I'M MR. MUKAI'S BROTHER.
UBB ...

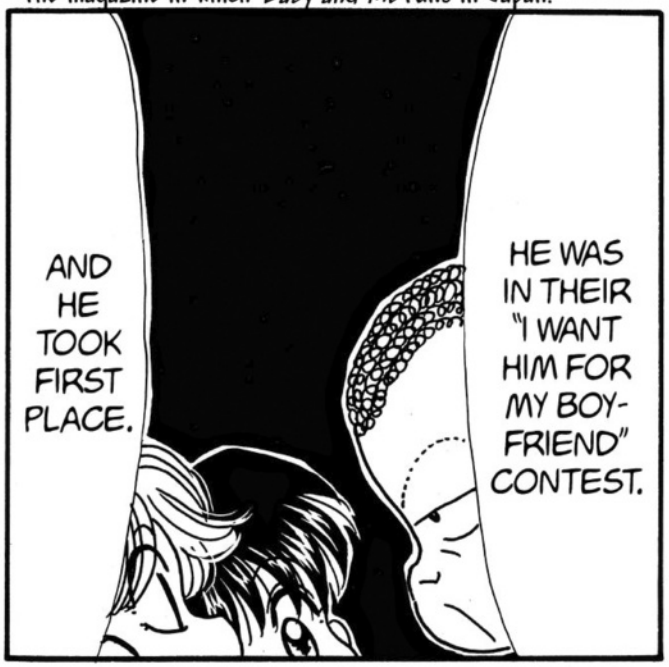
M-MINORU, THAT'S RUDE! HE'S HUMAN!!
MONS'ER! MONS'ER!
MWAAAAAH
THEY'RE NOT TEACHING THESE KIDS RIGHT.
Listen, you...

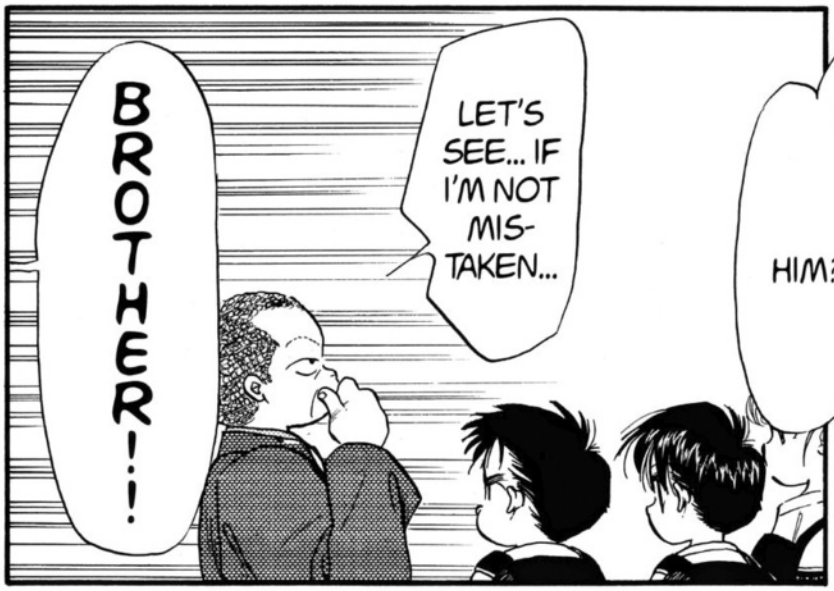






*The magazine in which *Baby and Me* runs in Japan.




BROTHER!!
LET'S SEE... IF I'M NOT MIS-TAKEN...

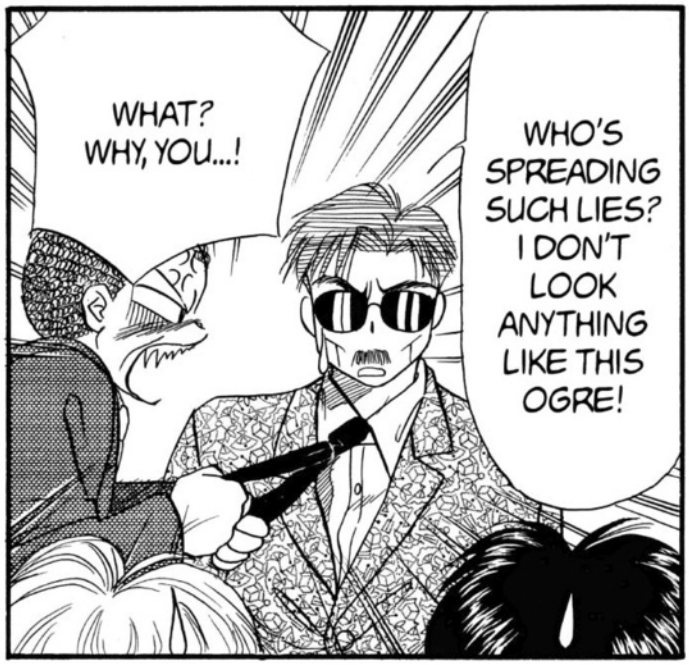
HUH?
HIM?
HOW OLD IS MR. MUKAI?

MY BROTHER AND I?
WE JUST HEARD HOW MUCH YOU AND YOUR BROTHER LOOK ALIKE.
GASP

I'VE BEEN VERY... BUSY.
YOU LOOK A LITTLE SICKLY.
ニヤニヤ

WHAT ARE YOU DOING...
... LOITERING AROUND MY NURSERY SCHOOL?
HEY, YOJI...
THAT'S HOW YOU GREET ME? I CAME TO SEE YOU!

I'M NOT BAD-LOOKING MYSELF.
MR. MUKAI'S GOOD-LOOKING ?
BUT...
GRAH
GRAH
A contest, eh?


WHAT? WHY, YOU...!
WHO'S SPREADING SUCH LIES? I DON'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE THIS OGRE!

BOO?
KSS
KSS
YEAH ...
WUNN
HMM... I WONDER HOW HE GOT TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THIS NURSERY SCHOOL.
WUNN
THE DIRECTOR'S A BUNDLE OF MYSTERIES, ISN'T HE?
WUNN
WUNN
SHLUK
OH...
KSS
KSS
SPLASH
?
SPLASH
KSS
KSS
DOOM!

LONG TIME...
WOOF
TAKTAKTAKTAK
...NO SEE!!
WAAAH!!
BWAZA!!
MINO-RU?!
SOBSOB
WOOF
WOOF
YOU...
MINO-RU.
...STUPID DOG!!
SPLASH
SPLASH
WOOF
YIKES!!
SHE'S EVEN MEANER THAN SHE WAS IN VOLUME ONE!!
WE HAVEN'T SEEN HER FOR THREE YEARS!!
IT'S THAT STUPID DOG FRANCES !!

WUZZ
HUH?
WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE?
WOOF WOOF WAAH
WUZZ

YOU LET THE SILLIEST THINGS GET TO YOU.
IT'S NOT SILLY!!
You really think your ability as director is being investigated?

YOJI...

WOOF
EEEEK!!

G-GO AWAY!!
SHOO! SHOO!

MINO-RU...
WE CAN PULL HIM IN THROUGH THE WINDOW!

WAAH
BWAZA.
SNORT

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT DOG?!
Stupid dog!
WHOSE DOG IS THAT? I'M GOING TO CALL THE POUND!!
GRRR

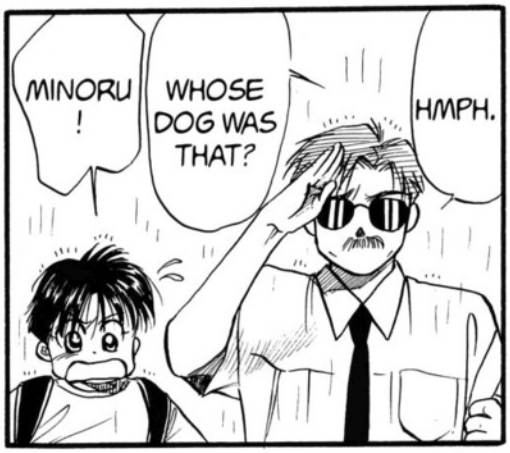
HUH?
WHUP
IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS!!
EEEK! NO, TAKUYA!
THAT'S AN UP-GRADED FRANCES!!
WHUP
UNGH...
HUH?!
TEACH-ER...
...GIVE ME THAT!!
WHAP
IT'S OKAY.
LEAVE THIS TO ME.
SWISH
!!

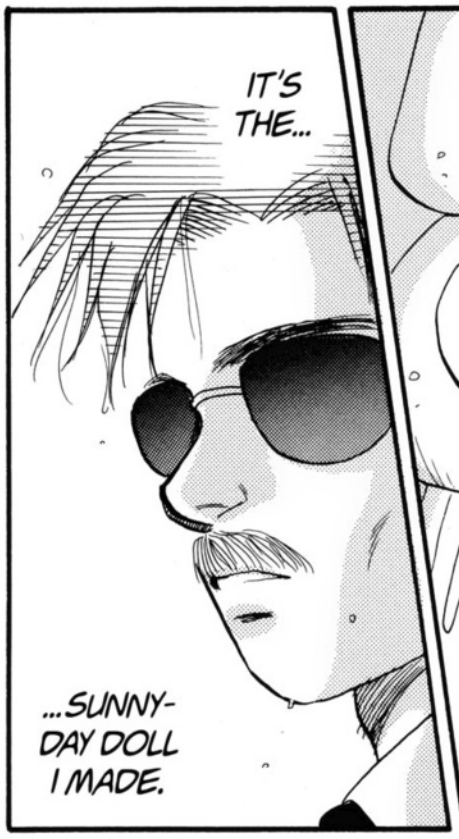
ALL RIGHT...
SHEEN
FWASH
FWUD

SWISH
TAK
GLEAM

THUD
HA...
A HOME RUN.

YIP
SWAAK


MINORU !
WHOSE DOG WAS THAT?
HMPH.


IT'S THE...
...SUNNY-DAY DOLL I MADE.

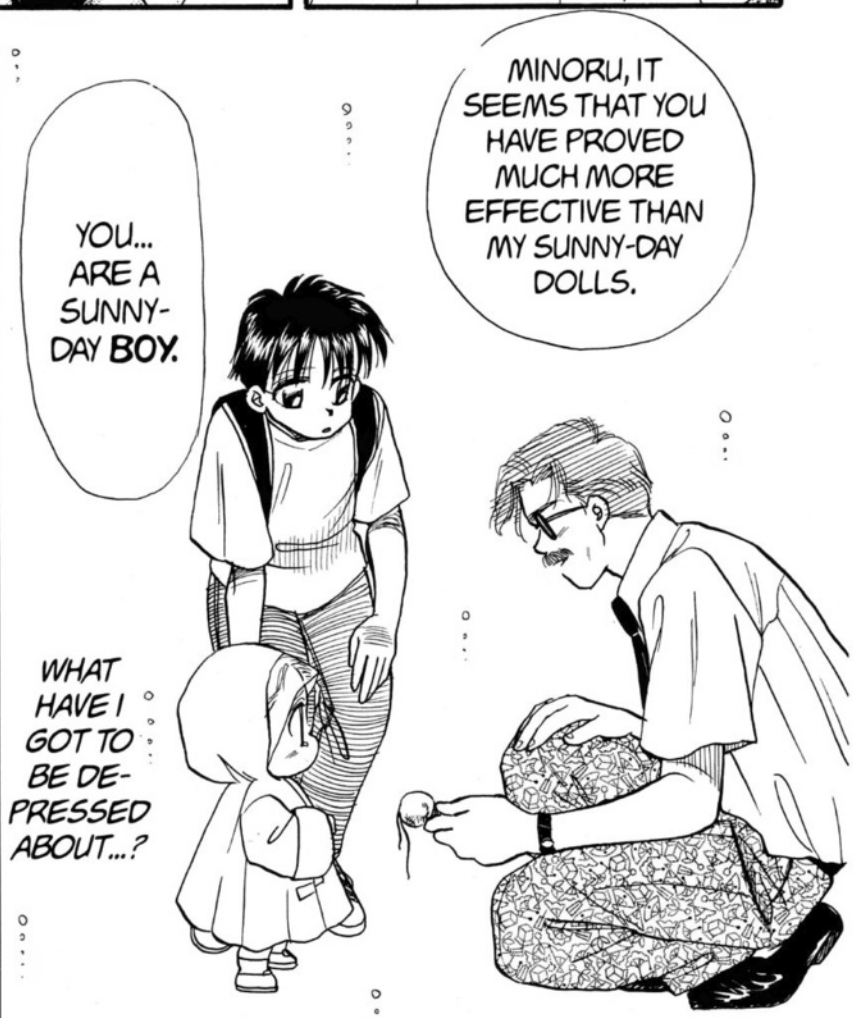
OH...

UBB ...
SOB
SOB

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MINORU ?
SOB
WAAAAAH
SOB

ALL BECAUSE OF THIS.
OH, MY...
MR. MUKAI'S DOLLY...
SNIFF
DITH ...
...FAW DOWN.
SNIFF

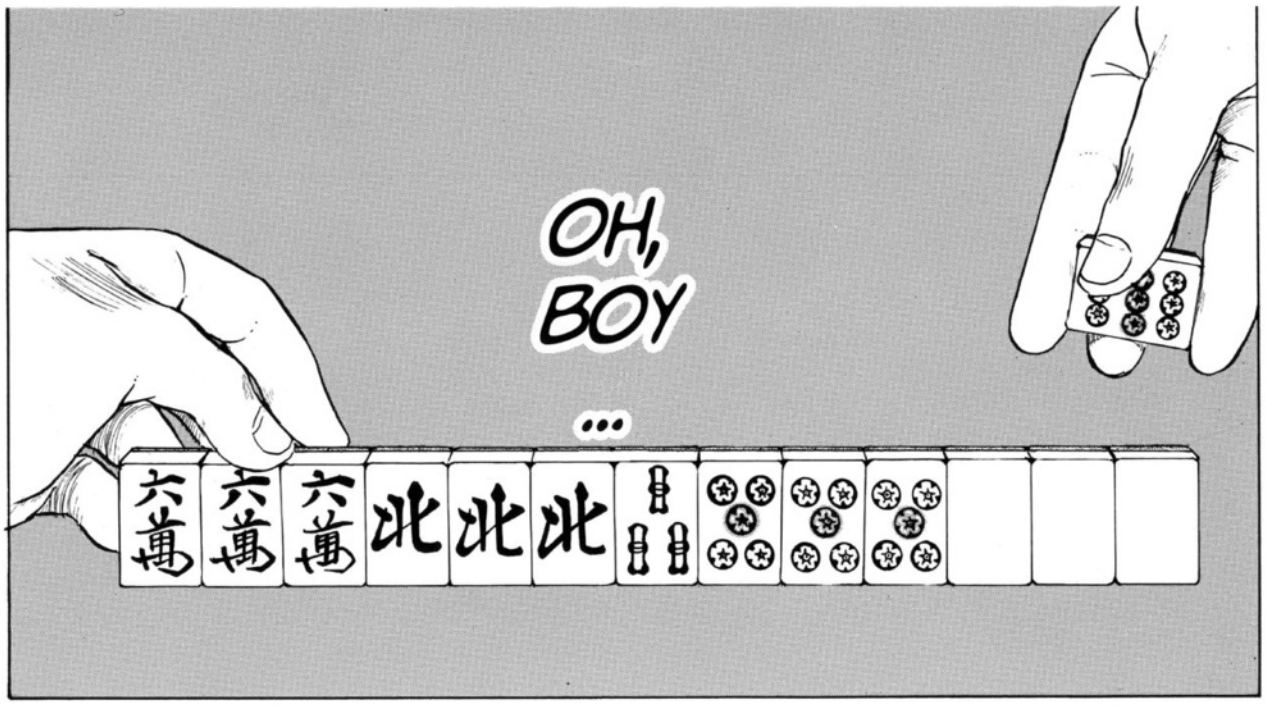
...WHEN I'M SURROUNDED BY SWEET CHILDREN LIKE THIS...
IT'S AS IF...
...THE SUN IS SHINING IN MY HEART.

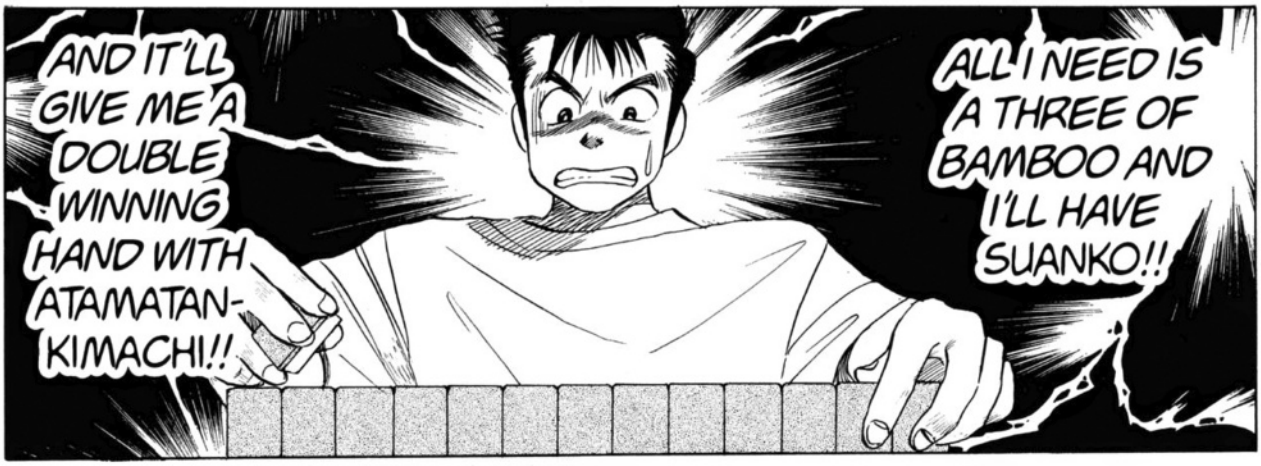

YOU... ARE A SUNNY-DAY **BOY.**
MINORU, IT SEEMS THAT YOU HAVE PROVED MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN MY SUNNY-DAY DOLLS.
WHAT HAVE I GOT TO BE DE-PRESSED ABOUT...?

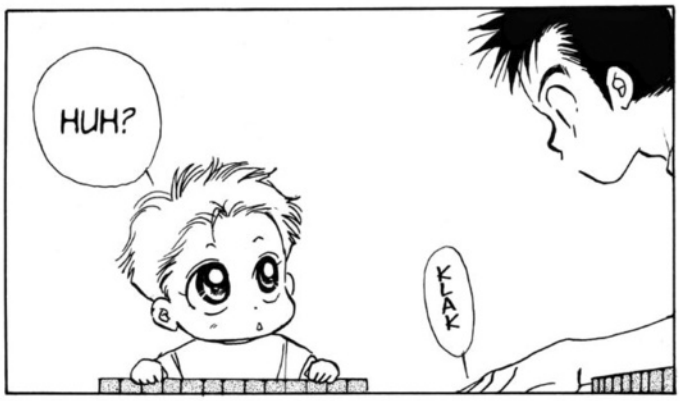
Chapter 51/The End

BABY & Me

Chapter 52







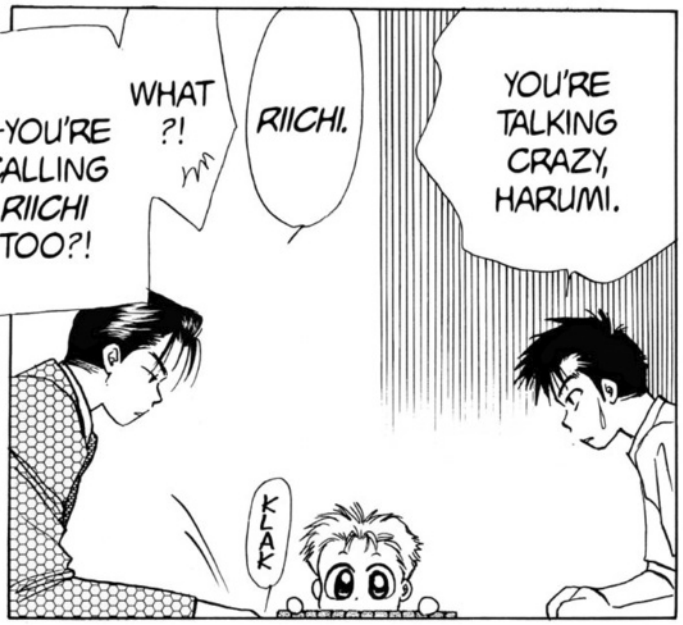
*When you have a hand like this, it's better not to call *riichi*, but Seiichi is too excited.

...
PUDDING.
HE'S PLAY-ING...
SEIICHI

WHAT MINORU'S PLAYING ISN'T MAHJONG.
HUH?

HEY!
OH ...
OH ...
H-HEY, WAIT A MINUTE !!
WHY'S MINORU PLAYING MAHJONG WITH US?!
KLAK

HEY!


Y-YOU'RE CALLING RIICHI TOO?!
WHAT ?!
RIICHI.
YOU'RE TALKING CRAZY, HARUMI.
KLAK

WHAT DO YOU WANT, TAKUYA?
SEI-ICHI ...

SEI-ICHI...
HUH?
TUG

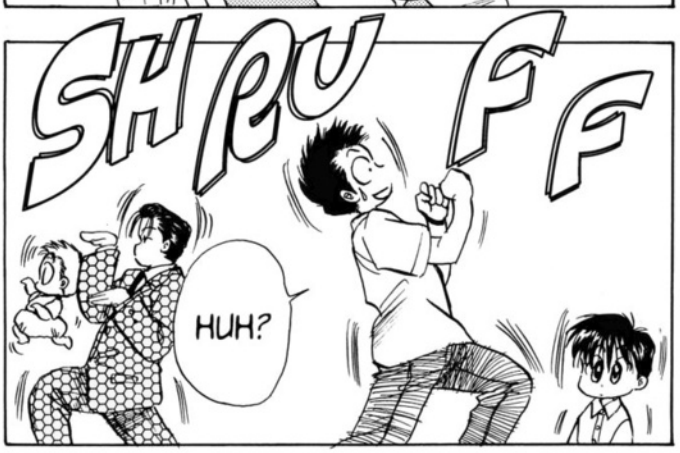
A PIECE OF CANDY ?!
WHAT KIND OF TILE IS THAT?!
UH-HUH.
NOD

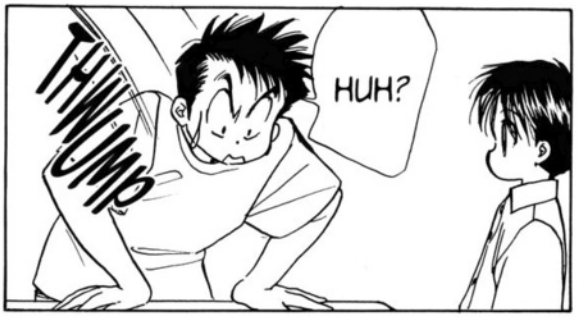
SHUNK
UGH!!

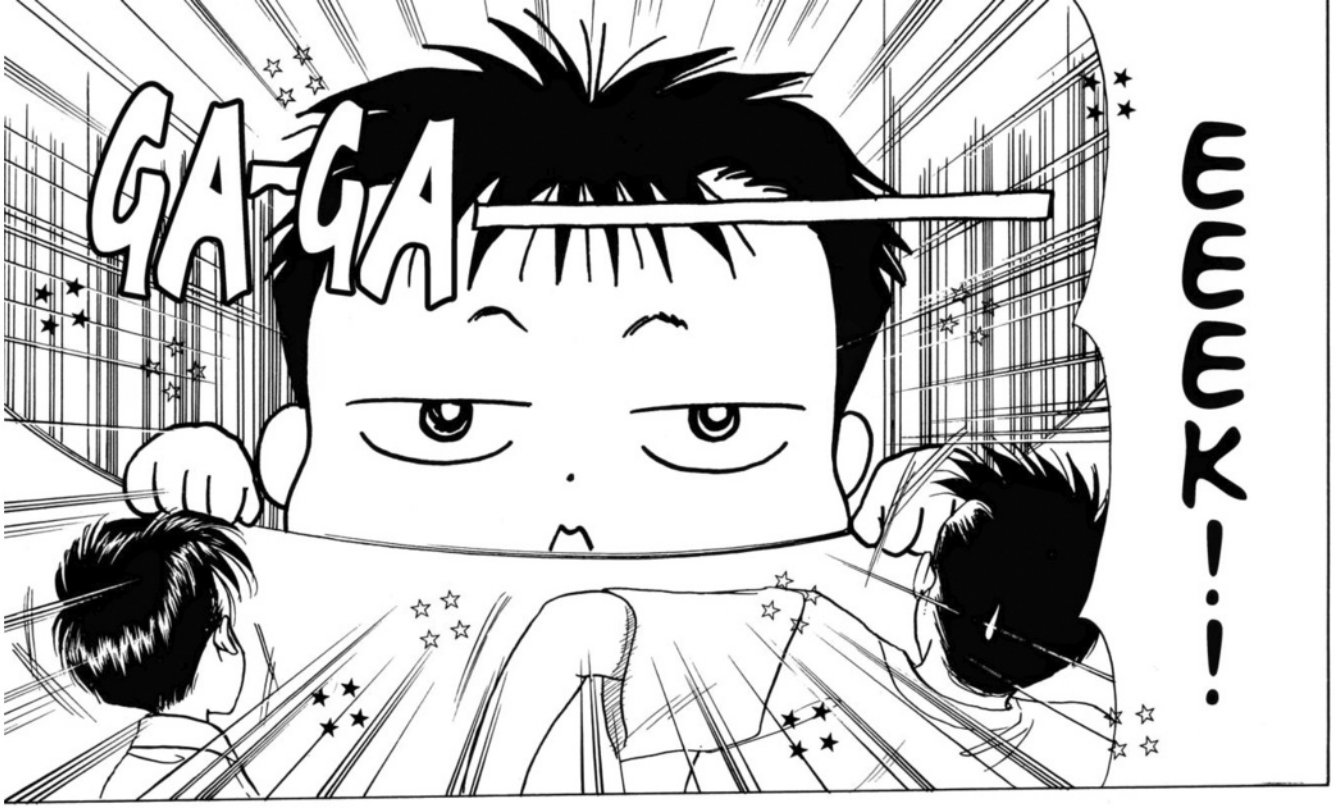
...TOMO-KO'S GOING TO LEAVE YOU.
IF YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME DOING THIS...
FRIENDLY GRIN

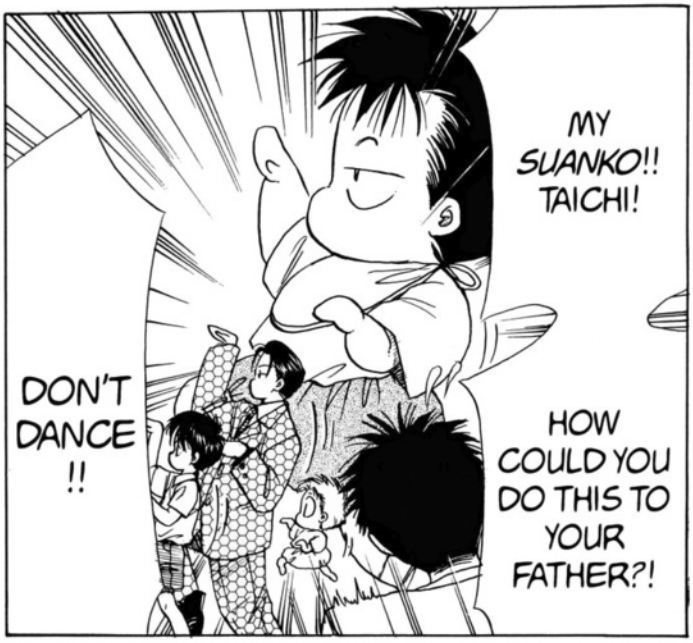
I'M DONE! I'M DONE !!
TA-DAH
HURRAY! ♡ I WIN!!

HEY!! WHY ARE YOU TWO DANCING?!
TAKUYA! HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT WITH SUCH AN ANGELIC SMILE ON YOUR FACE?!
in the air
KLAK


SHPUFF
HUH?


THUMP
HUH?


GA-GA
EEEK!!


MY SUANKO!! TAICHI!
DON'T DANCE !!
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO YOUR FATHER?!

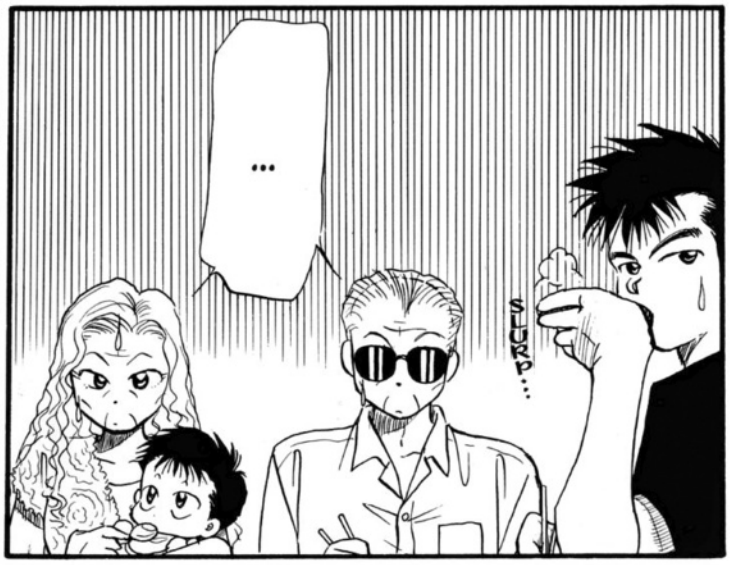
GA-GA!
AAAH !!
THWUNK

...
UGH
OHHH
UNNH

STONY SILENCE

UNH
...TO KNOCK ME OUT OF BED...
I KNOW HE'S HAVING A BAD DREAM, BUT...
HOW RUDE !!
UNH

I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING.
WHAT FOR?!
WHAT DID YOU DO, SEIICHI? HURRY UP AND APOLOGIZE.
GRR


...
SURR...

YOU WERE SHOUTING THINGS LIKE, "SUANKO!" AND "HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO YOUR FATHER?!" IN YOUR SLEEP LAST NIGHT. THEN YOU PUSHED ME OFF THE BED.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ?

SEI-ICHI...
YOU LOVE GAMBLING MORE THAN YOU LOVE TAICHI AND ME.

YOU TOLD SOMEBODY THEY HAD AN ANGELIC SMILE. WHO WAS IT?!

GLARE

OH...

What's going on?

PFFT

?

...

HUH?

SEI-ICHI...

SNAP

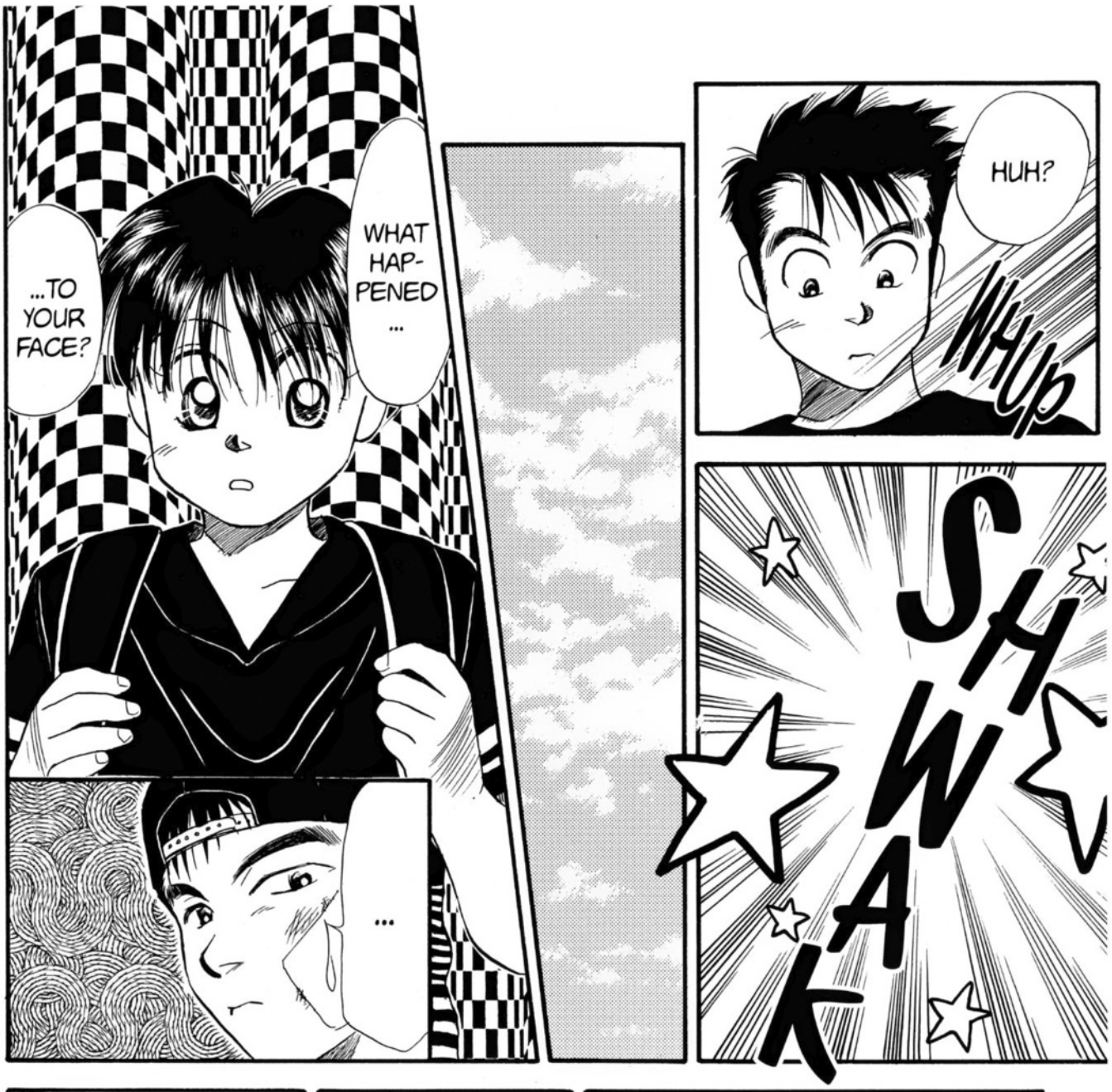
WOMEN ARE SO INSECURE!!

Ridicu-lous.

HOW STUPID!!

ARE YOU JEALOUS? YOU'RE JEALOUS!! OF A DREAM?!

GAHHAHAHAHA


HUH?
WHUP
WHAT HAP-PENED ...
...TO YOUR FACE?
...
SHWAK

SKREECH
AREN'T YOU GOING TO WORK, SEIICHI?

...

IT'S NOTHING. JUST RUN ALONG TO SCHOOL.
BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CALLED ME OVER.
SHOO SHOO

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED! THIS IS YOUR FAULT FOR SMILING AT ME LIKE THAT.
WHEN ?

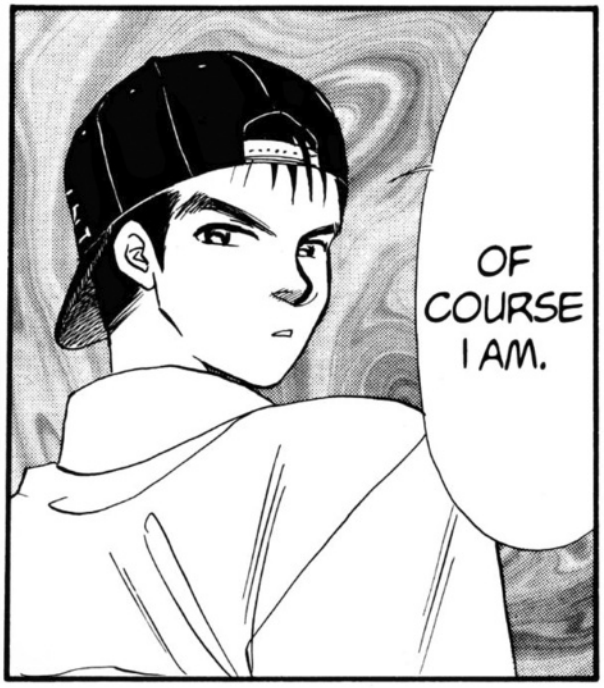
Author's Note: Part 2

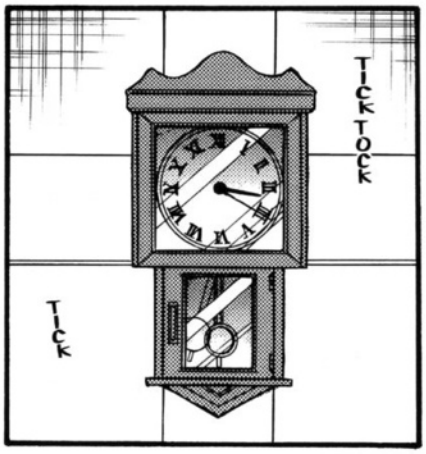
In December of 1994, I went back to visit my parents. When I lived at home, we had a tomcat named Chihaya, but he disappeared.

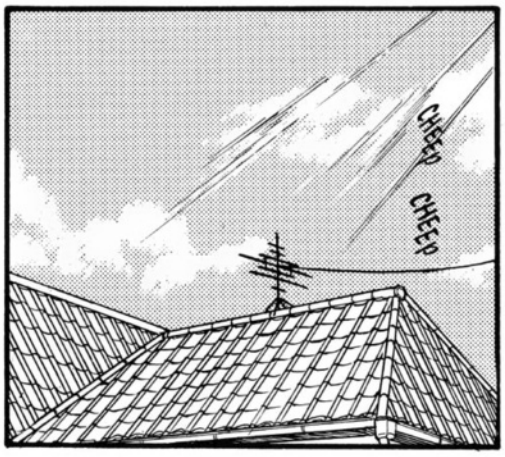
He was big and dignified, sort of like this.

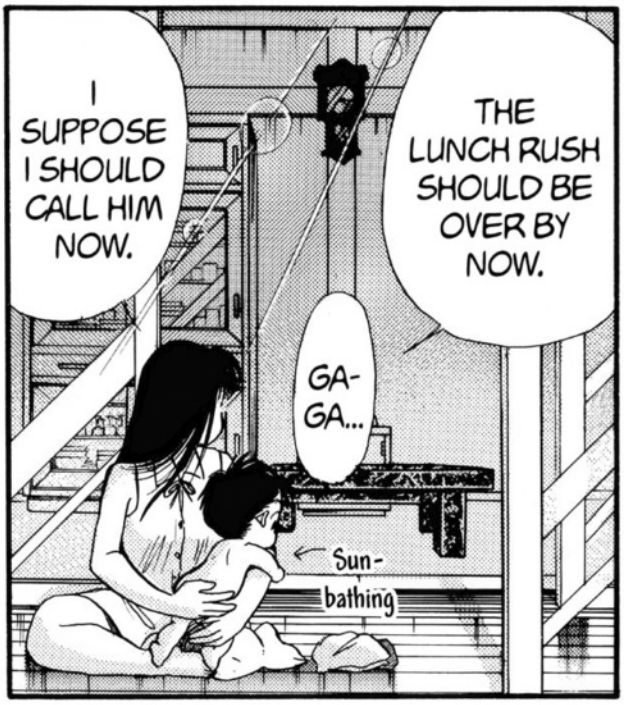
When I went back home that year, there was a new female cat named Miataro. My sister said that she was half tortoiseshell and half Persian.

Like this picture, her face and spots were like a tortoiseshell cat, but she had a fat butt like a Persian. Her eyes were a pretty gray.









A DAY OFF? ALL OF A SUDDEN ?
NO. HE SCHED-ULED IT SOME TIME AGO.
YACK
YACK
Ga-ga
SOME TIME AGO?

YACK
HE HAS THE DAY OFF TODAY.
WHAT ?
YACK

YACK
OH...
SEI-ICHI?
YACK

SEI-ICHI!!

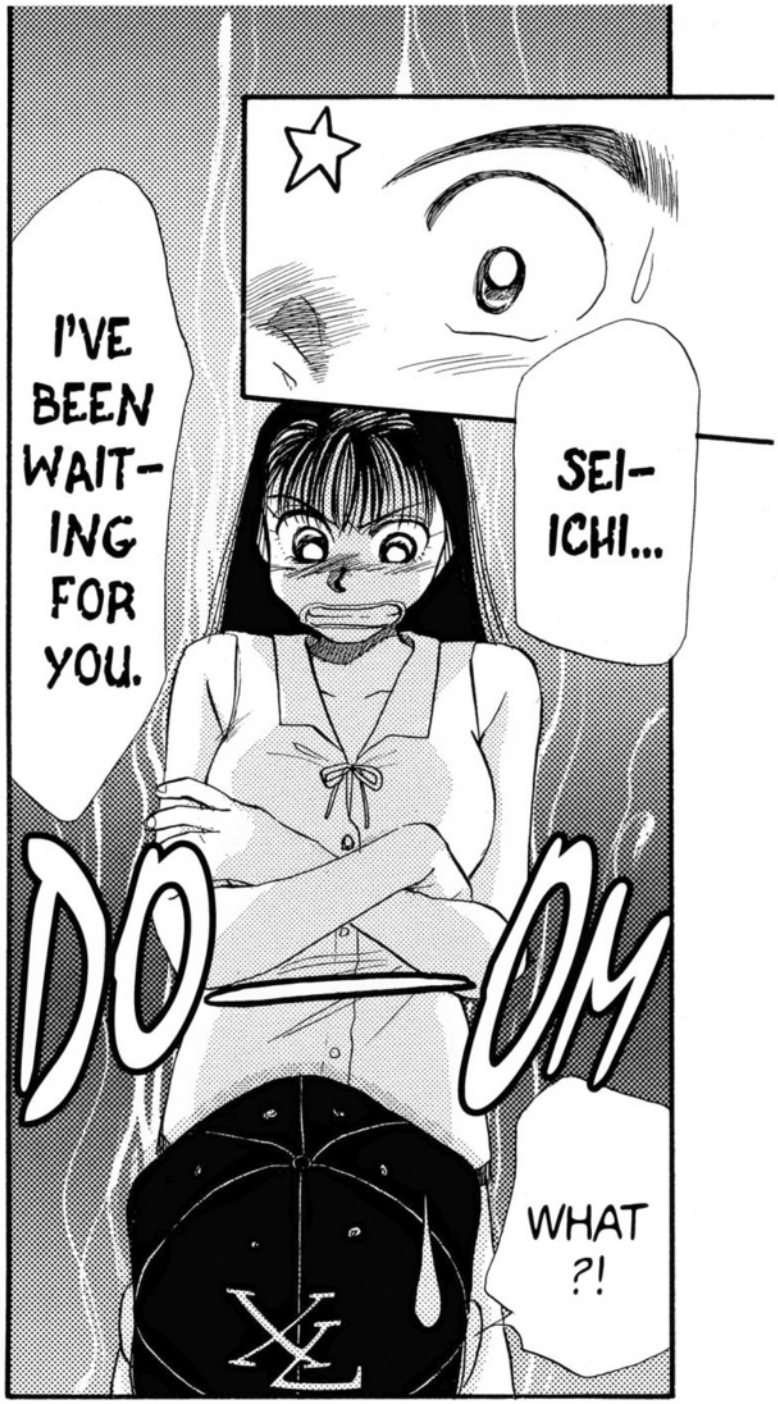
HE SCHED-ULED IT SOME TIME AGO?
AND HE NEVER TOLD ME!
Ga-ga
Ga-ga

ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU.
CHING...

I'M HOME ...
SHHAK

GRR... I'VE HAD IT NOW !!
GRR
DARN. I HAVE NO LUCK.
GRR

H-HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WHOA!
Devil woman ...


SEI-ICHI...
I'VE BEEN WAIT-ING FOR YOU.
DO—OM
WHAT ?!

AHA!

I FORGOT TO THROW IT AWAY!
SO, YOU DID GO TO THE HORSE RACES!!
GRRR
A RED PENCIL AND A LOSING RACE TICKET!

YOU JUST DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?!
THE MONEY I SPEND ON GAMBLING COMES OUT OF MY PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY.
LISTEN, I WORK HARD AT MY JOB.

IF YOU HAVE MONEY TO GAMBLE AWAY, WHY DON'T YOU EVER BUY ME A PRESENT ?!
WASN'T TODAY LOVELY ?
AH... THIS TEA IS GOOD.
QUIT IT, WILL YOU?

GET OUT.
WHAT ?

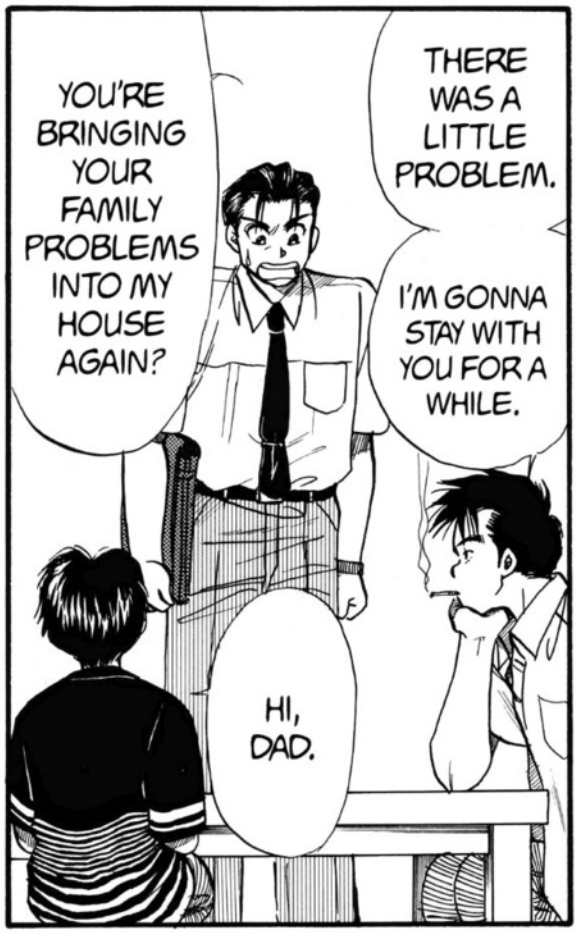
...

WELL, WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

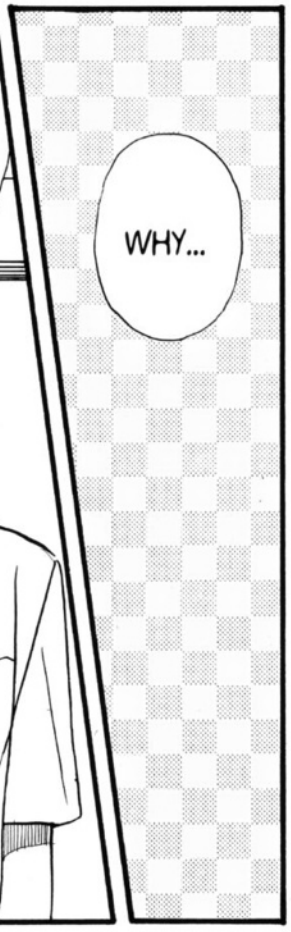
BUT... THIS IS MY HOME !!
YOU HEARD ME!! I'M TELLING YOU TO GET OUT!!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

WHAT ?
SLAM

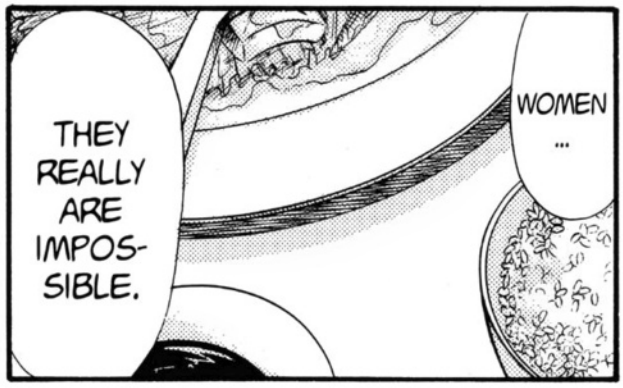

YOU'RE BRINGING YOUR FAMILY PROBLEMS INTO MY HOUSE AGAIN?
THERE WAS A LITTLE PROBLEM.
I'M GONNA STAY WITH YOU FOR A WHILE.
HI, DAD.

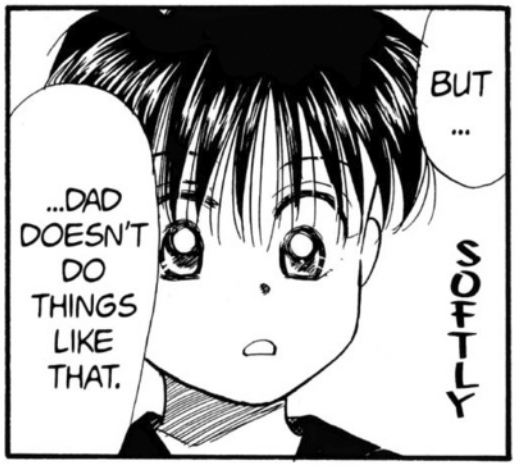
...IS SEIICHI HERE?


WHY...

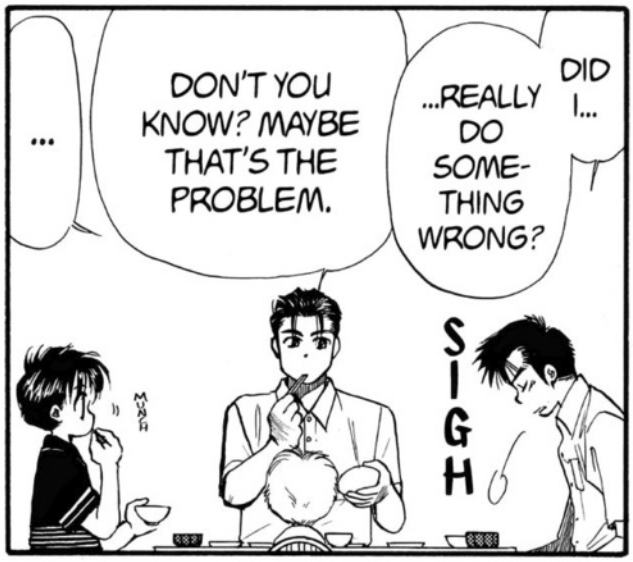
I MEAN, I HARDLY DO ANYTHING I WANT TO DO ANYMORE.
I JUST WENT TO THE HORSE RACES. I DIDN'T HURT ANYBODY.
I BET.

YOU'LL MAKE ME THROW UP.
STOP.
AND HERE I LOVE YOU SO MUCH THAT I EVEN DREAM ABOUT YOU.
YOU'RE HEART-LESS, HARUMI.


THEY REALLY ARE IMPOS-SIBLE.
WOMEN ...


BUT ...
SOFTLY
...DAD DOESN'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT.

TAKUYA, YOUR DAD WORKS REALLY HARD. IF HE WANTED TO RELAX BY PLAYING PACHINKO OR BETTING ON HORSES, WOULD YOU GET MAD AT HIM?
HUH?

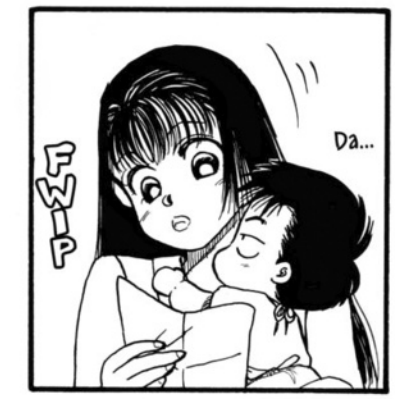

DID I...
...REALLY DO SOME-THING WRONG?
SIGH
DON'T YOU KNOW? MAYBE THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
...
MUNCH

OH?
HARUMI, DON'T YOU DO ANYTHING FOR FUN?
LEAVE ME OUT OF THIS.
MUNCH
MUNCH
Oh...

YEP ...
AND, HE TOLD ME TO GIVE YOU THIS.
WHAT?
A LETTER ?

THAT IDIOT SENT YOU TO GET HIS CLOTHES FOR TOMORROW?
Ga-ga...

SO?

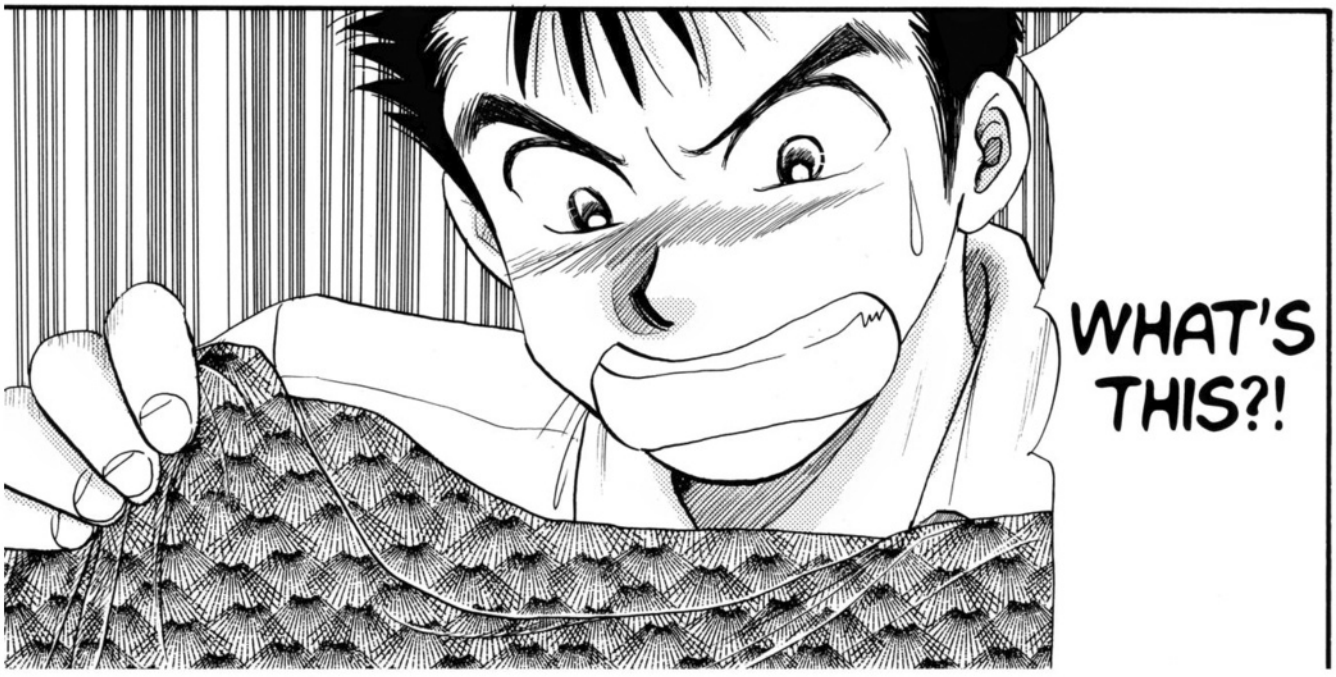

FWIP
Da...

HE SHOULD JUST TELL ME IN PERSON.
MAYBE IT'S AN APOLOGY. OR MAYBE IT SAYS HE LOVES ME.

OH.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU COME IN AND WAIT?
ALL RIGHT.

WHA...
WHA...

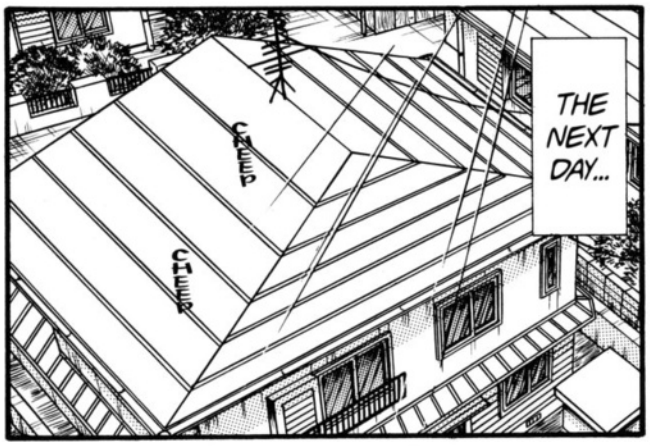
THAT JERK.
I did nothing wrong. I'm not apologizing. Bleah!
Seiichi


WHAT'S THIS?!

READ IT TO ME.
...

PUP
PUP

OH, MAN... AND SHE GAVE ME THESE SHORT SHORTS AND TRUNKS TOO!!
IT'S ONE OF DAD'S HORRIBLE SHIRTS!
She could've at least sent me some briefs.
OH, AND THIS IS HER REPLY.
Shorts
Trunks


THE NEXT DAY...
CHEEP
CHEEP

LISTEN, SEIICHI ...
I DID SOME THINKING YESTER-DAY...

A CHILD SHOULDN'T READ WORDS LIKE THIS.
AAAH!
THAT WITCH !!
SNIP
censored
SNIP

THEN YOU SHOULD TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHOSE ATTENTION SHE'S CRAVING.
...

MY MOM WOULD BE HAPPY TO LOOK AFTER TAICHI FOR HER, IF SHE'D ASK.
... TAKING CARE OF TAICHI.

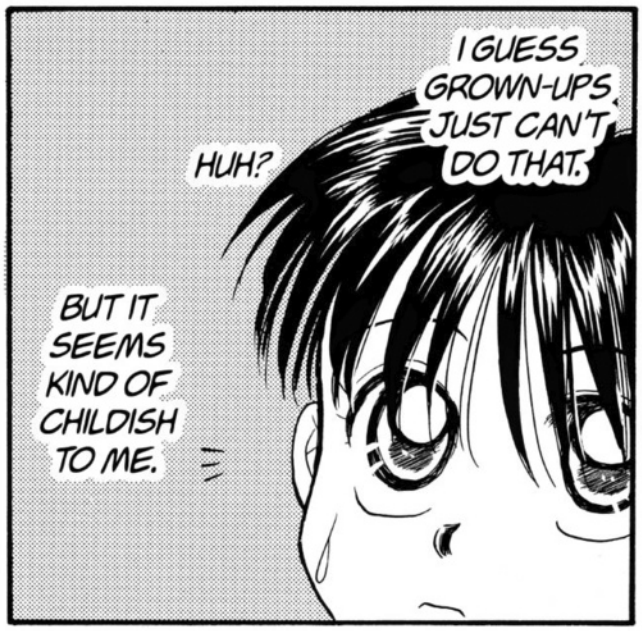
MAYBE TOMOKO'S A LITTLE LONELY.
SHE STAYS HOME EVERY DAY...

...
AH...
AH...

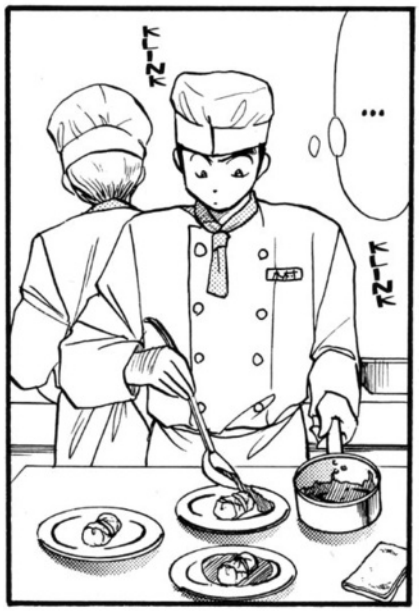
THIS IS NO GOOD.
YOUR TROUSERS ARE TOO LONG FOR ME, HARUMI.
YEAH, WELL, I'M TALLER THAN YOU.

GROWN-UPS ALWAYS BEAT AROUND THE BUSH...

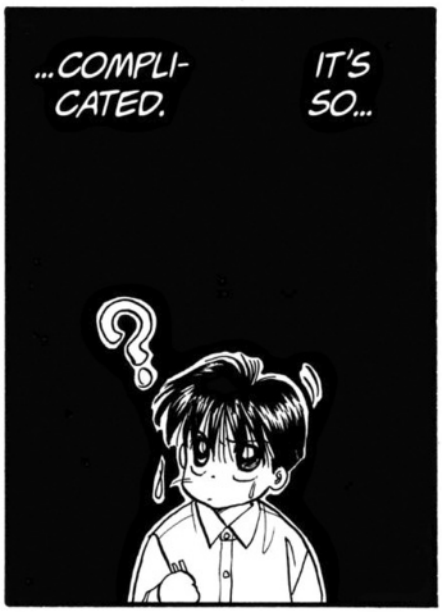
THAT'S GROWN-UP TALK...
... MINO-RU.
HUH?

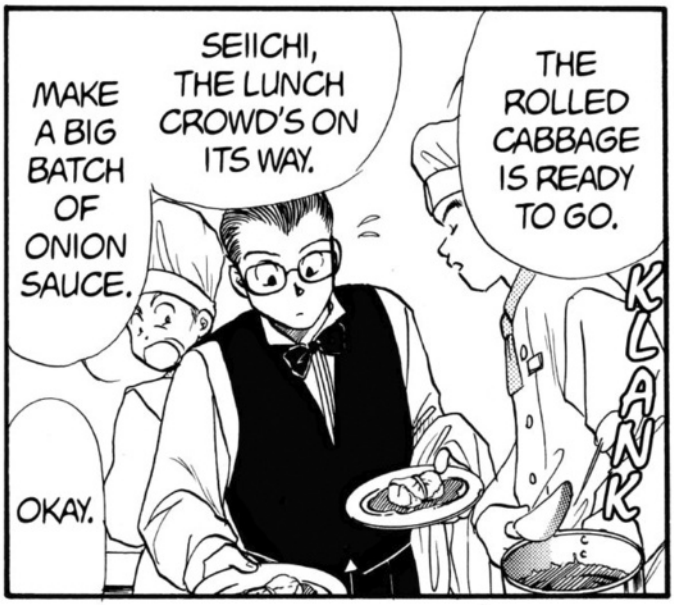

I GUESS GROWN-UPS JUST CAN'T DO THAT.
HUH?
BUT IT SEEMS KIND OF CHILDISH TO ME.

WHY DON'T THEY JUST SAY WHAT THEY MEAN?
HE SHOULD JUST APOLO-GIZE.
EGG.


...
KLINK
KLINK

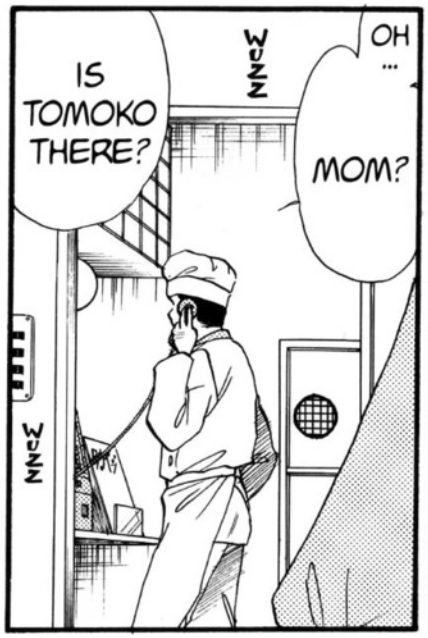
CASE
Le Poire


...COMPLI-CATED.
IT'S SO...


MAKE A BIG BATCH OF ONION SAUCE.
SEIICHI, THE LUNCH CROWD'S ON ITS WAY.
THE ROLLED CABBAGE IS READY TO GO.
KLANK
OKAY.

SHE'S LONELY?
AW, WHAT DOES THAT HARUMI KNOW?

SHE'S NOT? WELL, WHERE'D SHE GO?
I DON'T KNOW.
BUT NEVER MIND THAT. APOLOGIZE TO HER ALREADY.

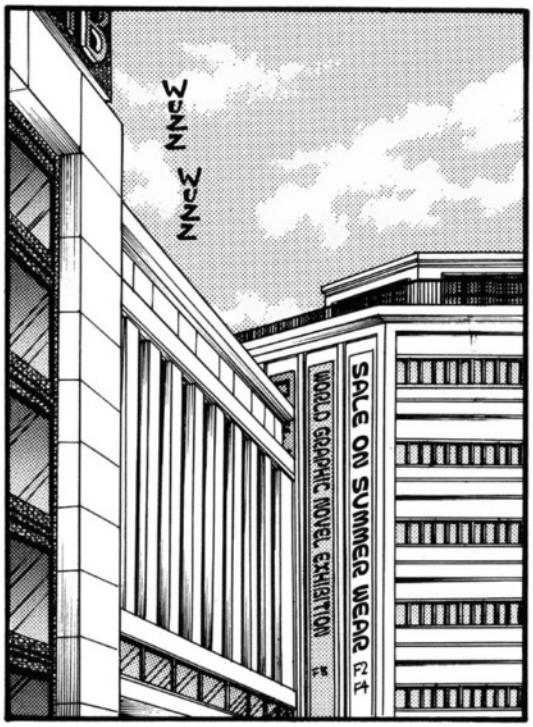

IS TOMOKO THERE?
WUZZ
WUZZ
OH ...
MOM?

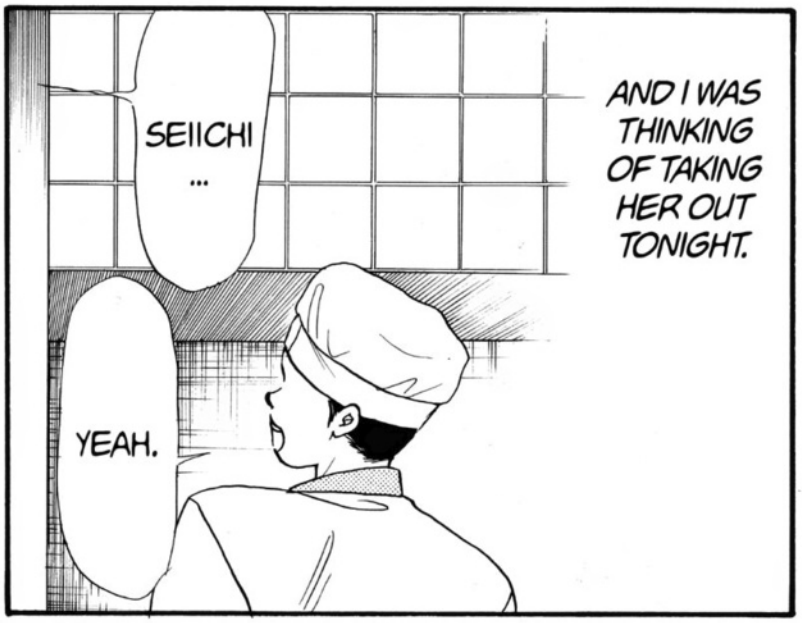
WELL, HURRY UP THEN!
SEI-ICHI!
BUT FIRST, I HAVE TO MAKE A CALL.
AYE-AYE, SIR.

HMPH!
KLAK...

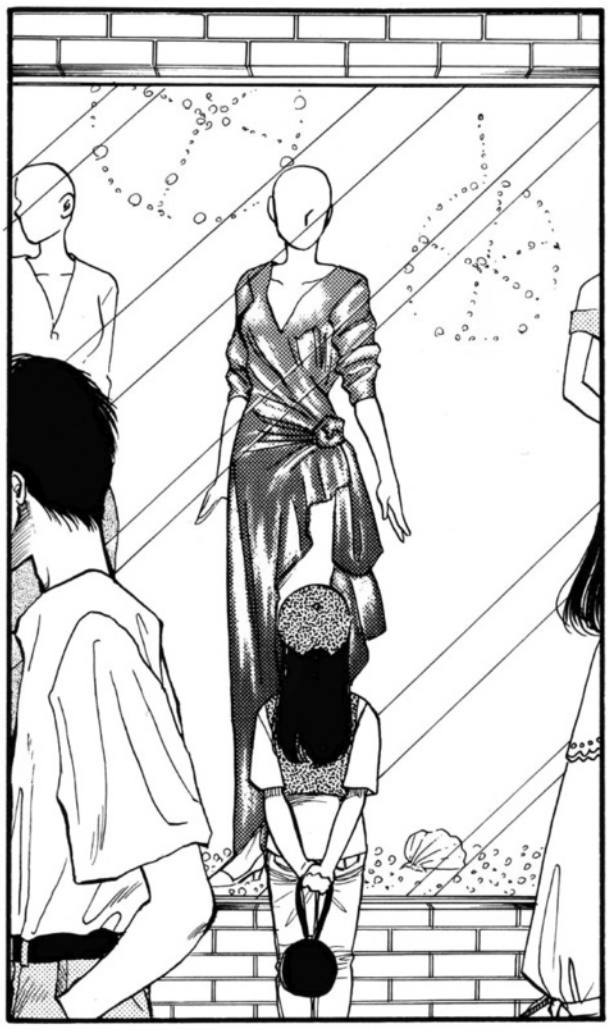
NEVER MIND. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL HER.
I'LL LET HER KNOW THAT YOU CALLED WHEN SHE GETS HOME.

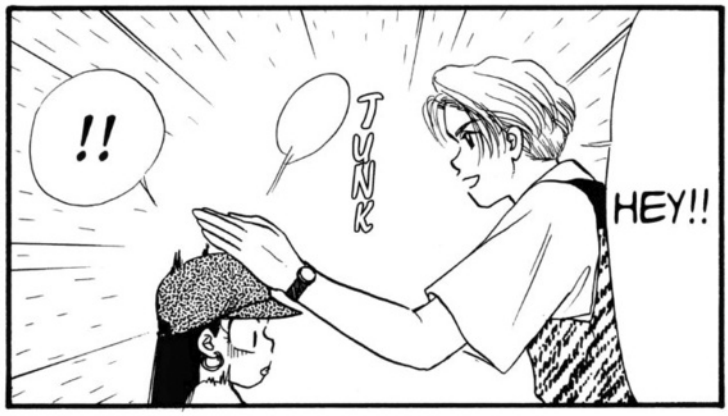
AND SHE'S VERY PRETTY. SHE COULD'VE HAD ANY MAN SHE WANTED.
LISTEN ...
YOU GOT LUCKY WHEN YOU FOUND THAT GIRL, SEIICHI. SHE'S ONE IN A MILLION.
NO WAY.


SALE ON SUMMER WEAR
WORLD GRAPHIC NOVEL EXHIBITION
WUZZ
WUZZ

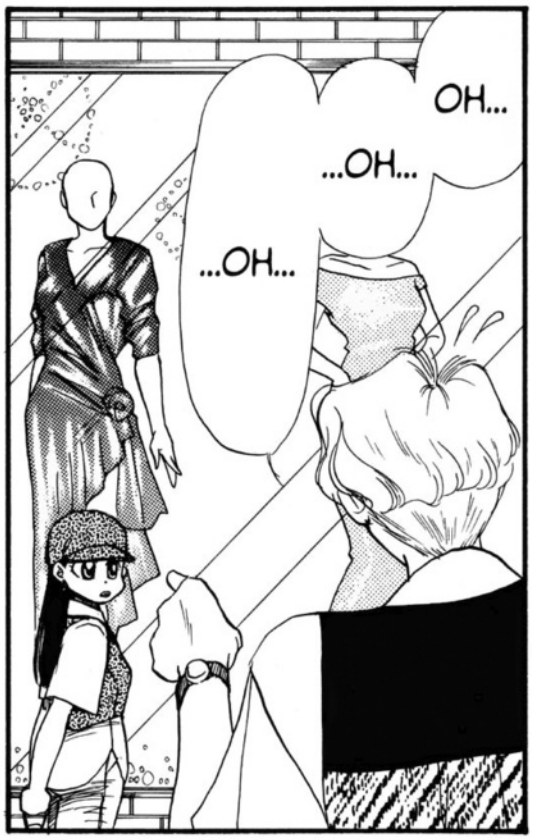

SEIICHI ...
YEAH.
AND I WAS THINKING OF TAKING HER OUT TONIGHT.

I LOOK LIKE A FOREIGNER ANYWAY. MY BUST, AT LEAST.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
I'D LOOK LIKE A FOR-EIGNER IN THAT.
DAZED..




!!
JUNK
HEY!!

TOMO-KO MOCHI-ZUKI, RIGHT ?!
TOMO-KO!!
WHAT THE...?

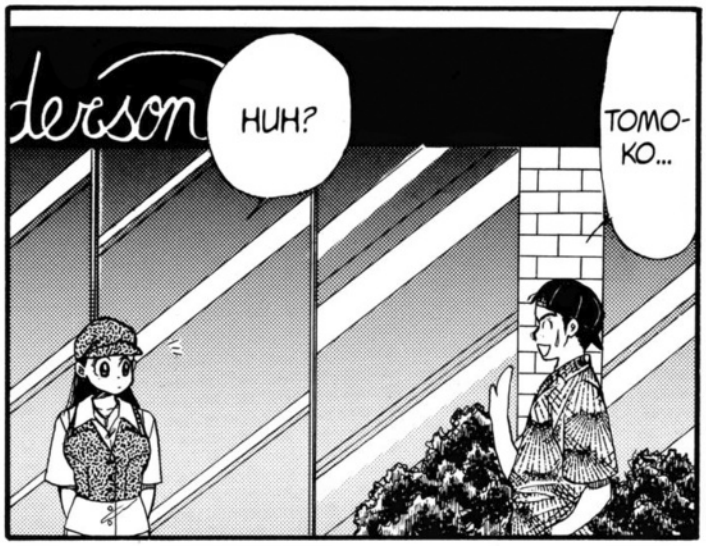

OH...
...OH...
...OH...

YEAH.
FROM HIGH SCHOOL?
NII-MURA?
SHINOBU NIIMURA!
IT'S ME!
YEAH.
ARE YOU WORKING NOW? DOING SALES?
YEAH.
YOU MUST BE POPULAR WITH THE GIRLS.
YOU'RE ON THE LATE SHIFT TOMOR-ROW, RIGHT?
OKAY.
SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.
YEAH.
GOOD JOB, EVERY-BODY!
SMILE
SMILE
...

OH!
Anderson
WHOOSH

HUH?

BOY, AM I TIRED.
SIGH
KRAK
Asbel
THE GREAT SHEIK EXHIBITION


HUH?
TOMO-KO...

AHEM.

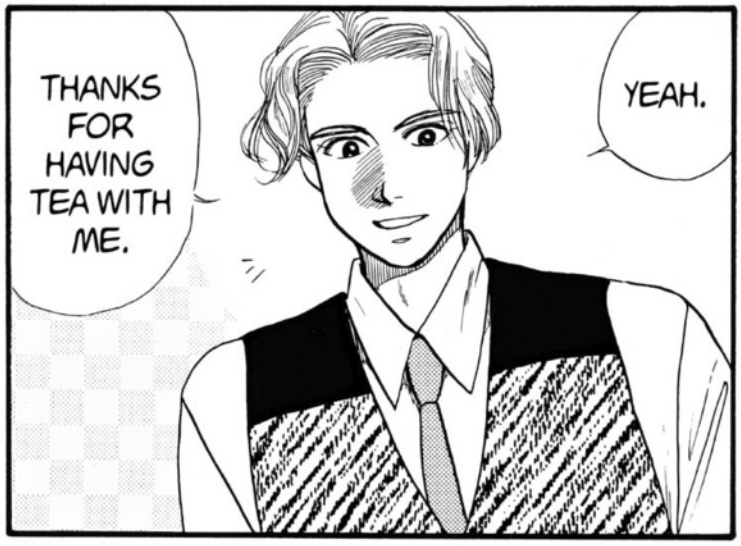
Hmm

OH!
HUH?

SEI-ICHI.
THROUGH WITH WORK?
YEAH.

AW, COME ON. LET'S MAKE UP, ALREADY.
HMPH.
WHUP
MOCHI-ZUKI...

OH!
TWEEK
I'M STILL MAD AT YOU! WHY ARE YOU TALKING TO ME LIKE NOTHING'S WRONG?!
OW, OW...


YEAH.
THANKS FOR HAVING TEA WITH ME.

?!
OH, NII-MURA...
GOING BACK TO WORK?

GASP

HI.
SEIICHI KIMURA.

...
SEIICHI, THIS IS SHINOBU NIIMURA, AN OLD FRIEND FROM HIGH SCHOOL.
HOW DO YOU DO?

THREE DAYS? YOU NEVER TOLD ME.
WELL, YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DAY OFF, EITHER.

WELL, OUR CLASS REUNION IS IN THREE DAYS.
"SEE YOU SOON"?

WELL, SO LONG, MOCHI-ZUKI.
SEE YOU SOON.
I DON'T NORMALLY WEAR UGLY SHIRTS.
OKAY.
MUTTER
MUTTER

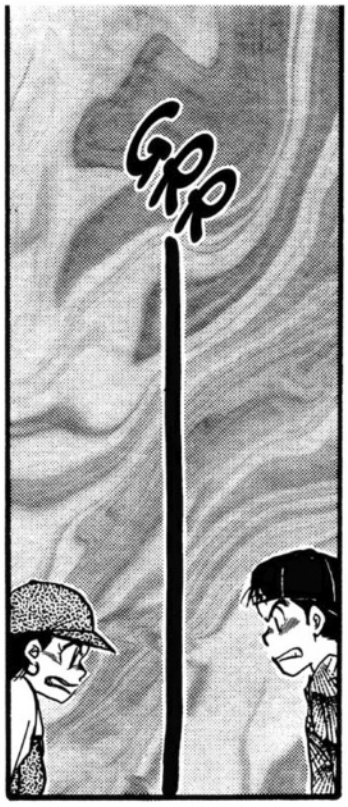
...

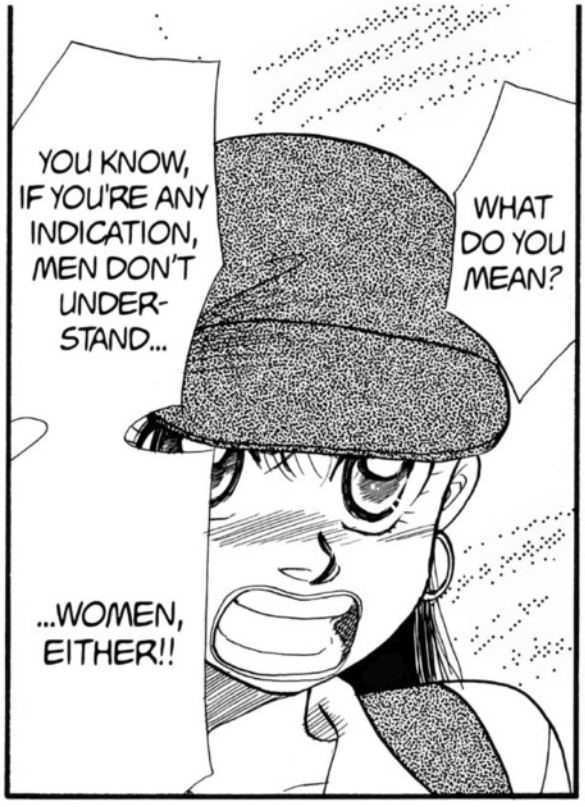
WHY'D YOU LET HIM CALL YOU MOCHIZUKI?
THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL CALLED ME.
OLD HABITS DIE HARD.
A DEPARTMENT STORE

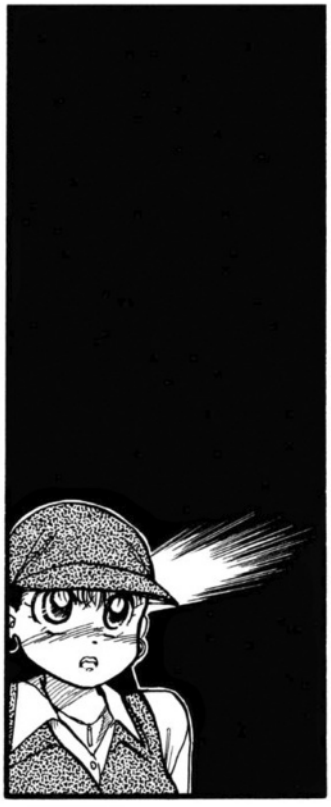
ARE YOU JEAL-OUS?
OF COURSE NOT!
IT'S JUST THAT-- WELL--THAT GUY...
HE...

I SURE DIDN'T WANT TO MEET UP WITH YOU UNDER THESE CIRCUM-STANCES.

BUT I JUST GOT OFF WORK.
I LOOK LIKE AN UNEMPLOYED BUM.
AND ME...
MUTTER
MUTTER
DON'T BE SILLY!
SO?
...WELL, THAT HE'S GOT A GOOD JOB.
THE WAY HE WAS DRESSED SAID...
MUTTER
MUTTER
SEIICHI, PLEASE ...
YOU'RE BEING RIDICULOUS.
TOMOKO, THAT GUY...
...IS IN LOVE WITH YOU!
YOU'RE TOO SELF-CONSCIOUS!!
NOBODY WOULD THINK THAT!
...DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW MEN ARE!!
WOMEN ...


GRR


YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE ANY INDICATION, MEN DON'T UNDER-STAND...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...WOMEN, EITHER!!

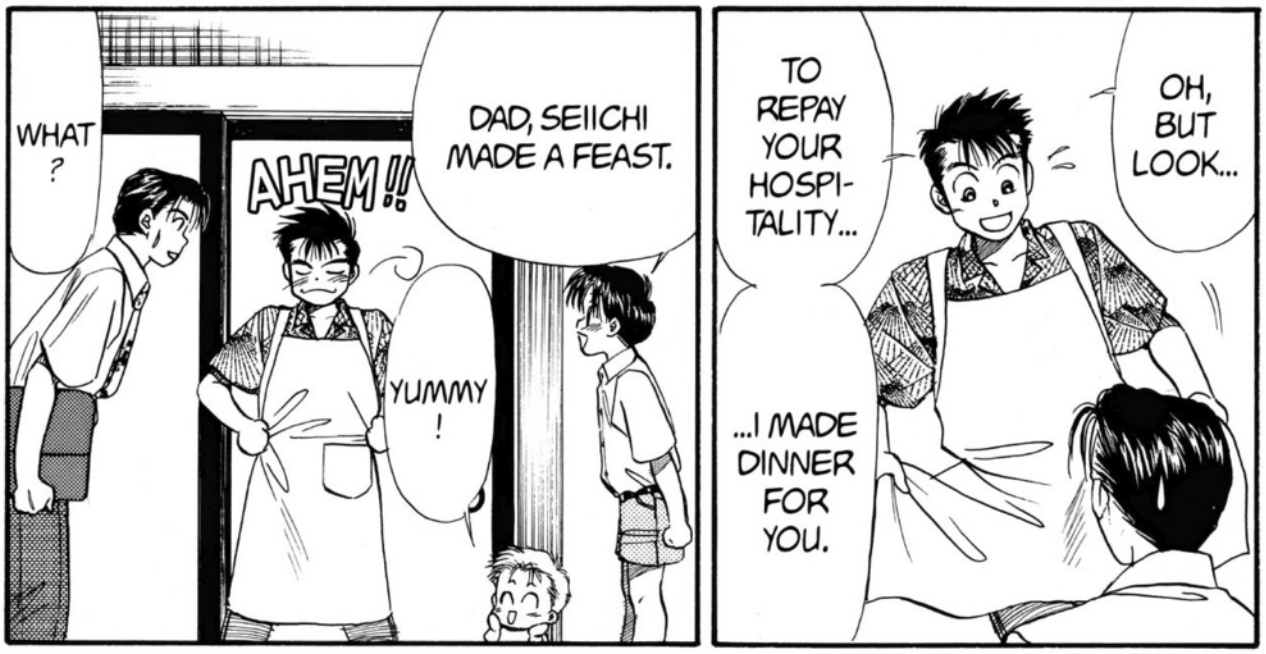


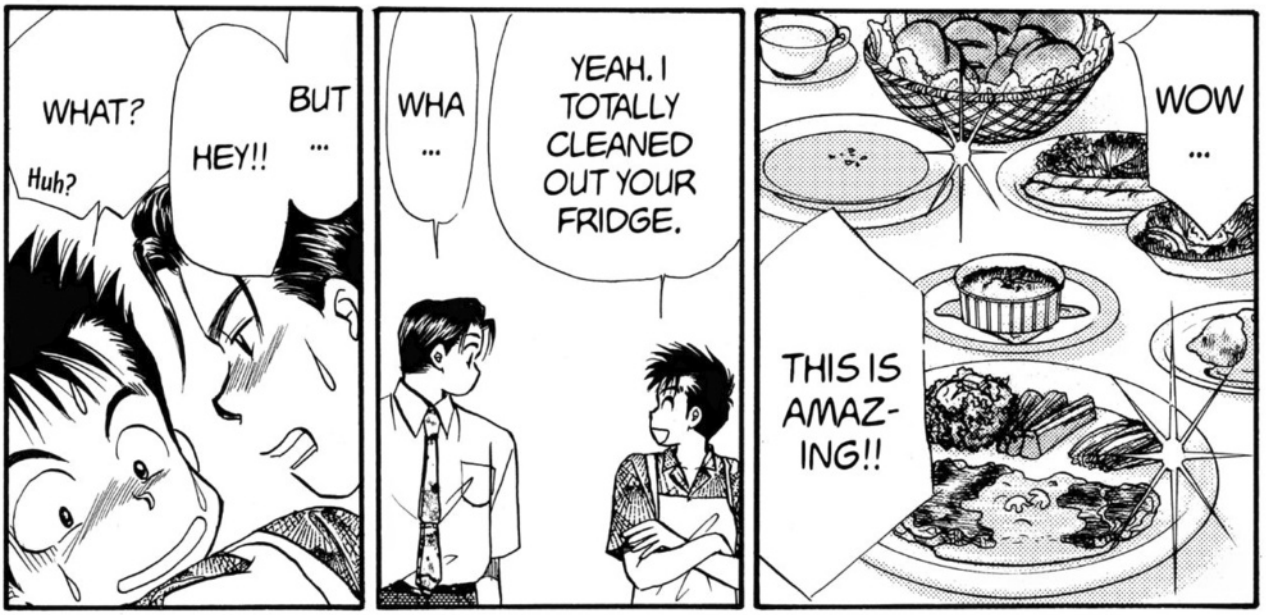
DID YOU BUY SOME FOR ME TOO?
TROMP
TROMP
WELCOME HOME. ♡
GACK

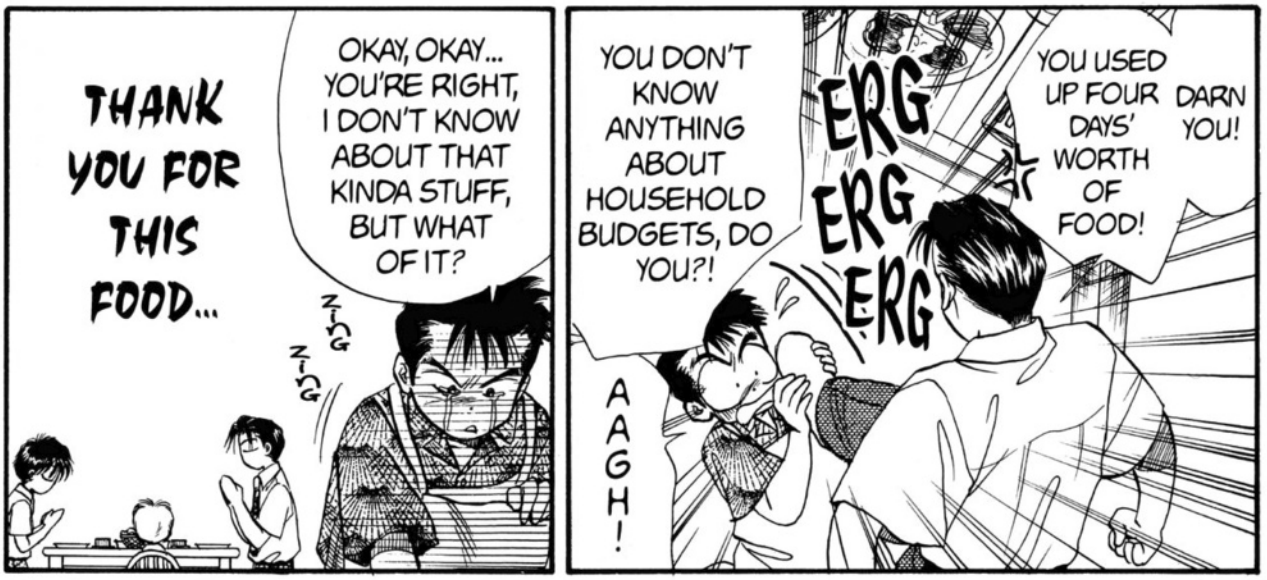
SHHAK
I'M HOME ...

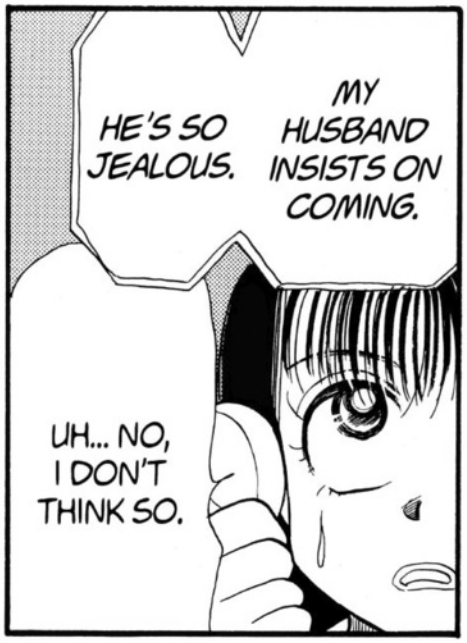
WELL... WE HAD ANOTHER FIGHT.
S-SEIICHI!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ?!

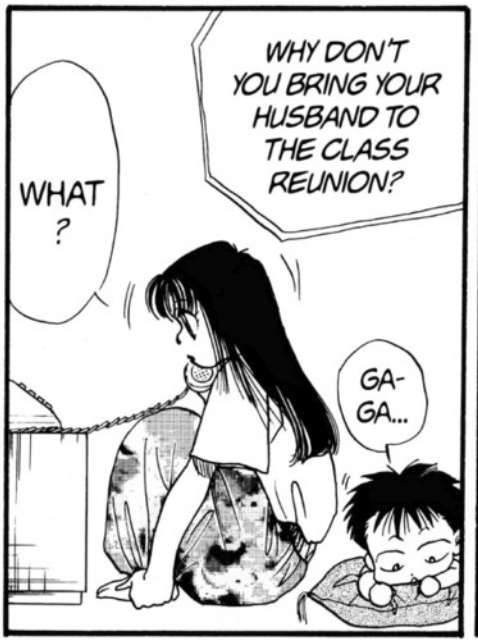
I BOUGHT YOU SOME CAKE.
TAKU-YA...
MINO-RU...


WHAT ?
AHEM!!
DAD, SEIICHI MADE A FEAST.
YUMMY !
TO REPAY YOUR HOSPI-TALITY...
OH, BUT LOOK...
...I MADE DINNER FOR YOU.

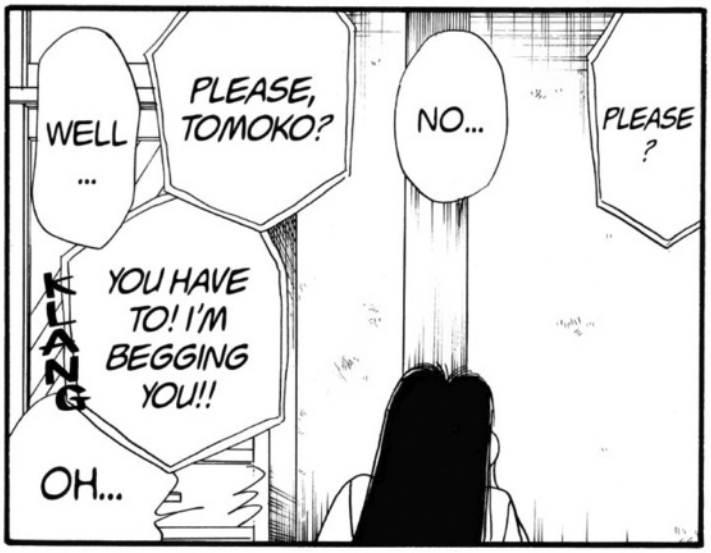

WHAT?
Huh?
HEY!!
BUT ...
WHA ...
YEAH. I TOTALLY CLEANED OUT YOUR FRIDGE.
WOW ...
THIS IS AMAZ-ING!!


THANK YOU FOR THIS FOOD...
OKAY, OKAY... YOU'RE RIGHT, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT KINDA STUFF, BUT WHAT OF IT?
ZING ZING
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS, DO YOU?!
ERG ERG ERG
YOU USED UP FOUR DAYS' WORTH OF FOOD!
DARN YOU!
AAGH!


HE'S SO JEALOUS.
MY HUSBAND INSISTS ON COMING.
UH... NO, I DON'T THINK SO.


WHY DON'T YOU BRING YOUR HUSBAND TO THE CLASS REUNION?
WHAT ?
GA-GA...

YEAH ...
I SAW NIIMURA TODAY. HE LOOKS GREAT.


WELL ...
PLEASE, TOMOKO?
NO...
PLEASE ?
KLANG
YOU HAVE TO! I'M BEGGING YOU!!
OH...

WHAT?! PLEASE! I DON'T WANT TO BE THE ONLY ONE TO BRING A SPOUSE!
BUT SEIICHI HATES HAVING TO MAKE NICE WITH STRANGERS.

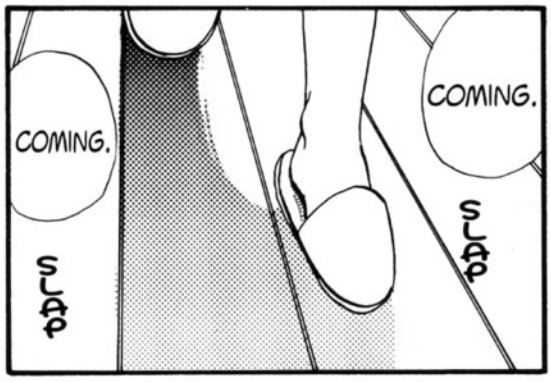
GA-GA...

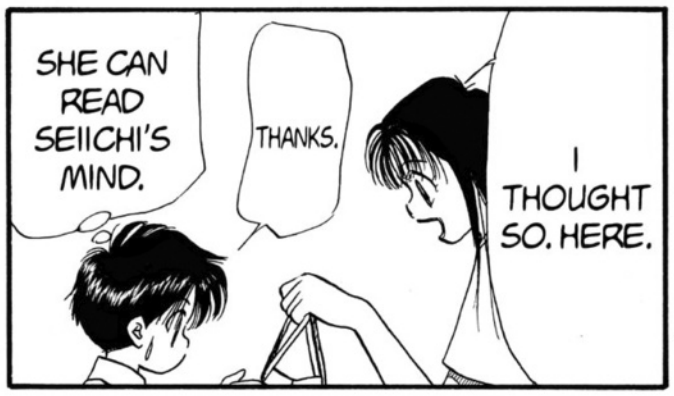
MA-MA...
Da...

GA-GA...
NAA
GA-GA...
TALK ABOUT PUSHY.
NAA

SHHAK
GOOD EVE-NING.
IT'S ME, TAKUYA.
Huh?

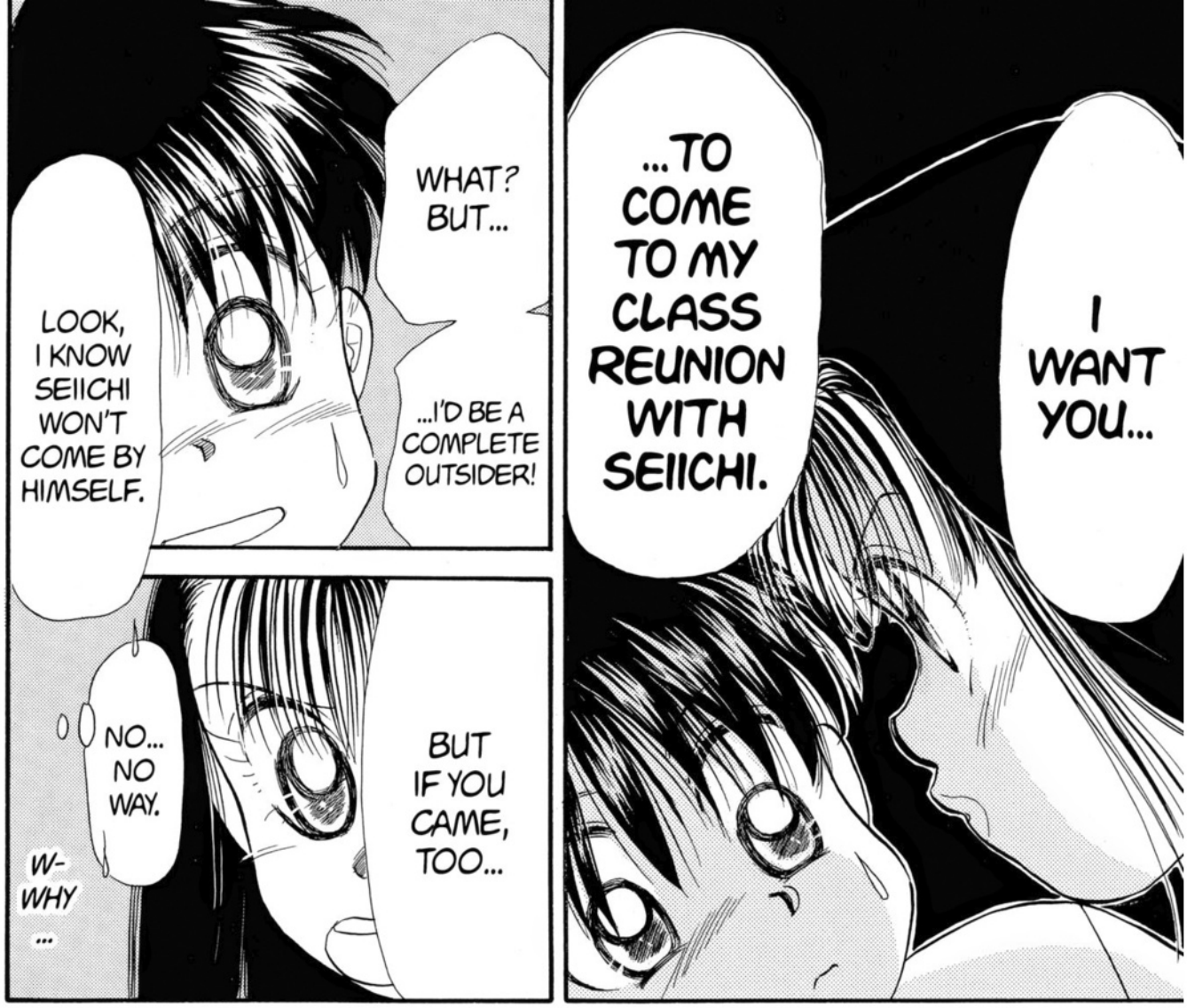
TAICHI!
SAY THAT AGAIN!
PLUP
GA-GA...

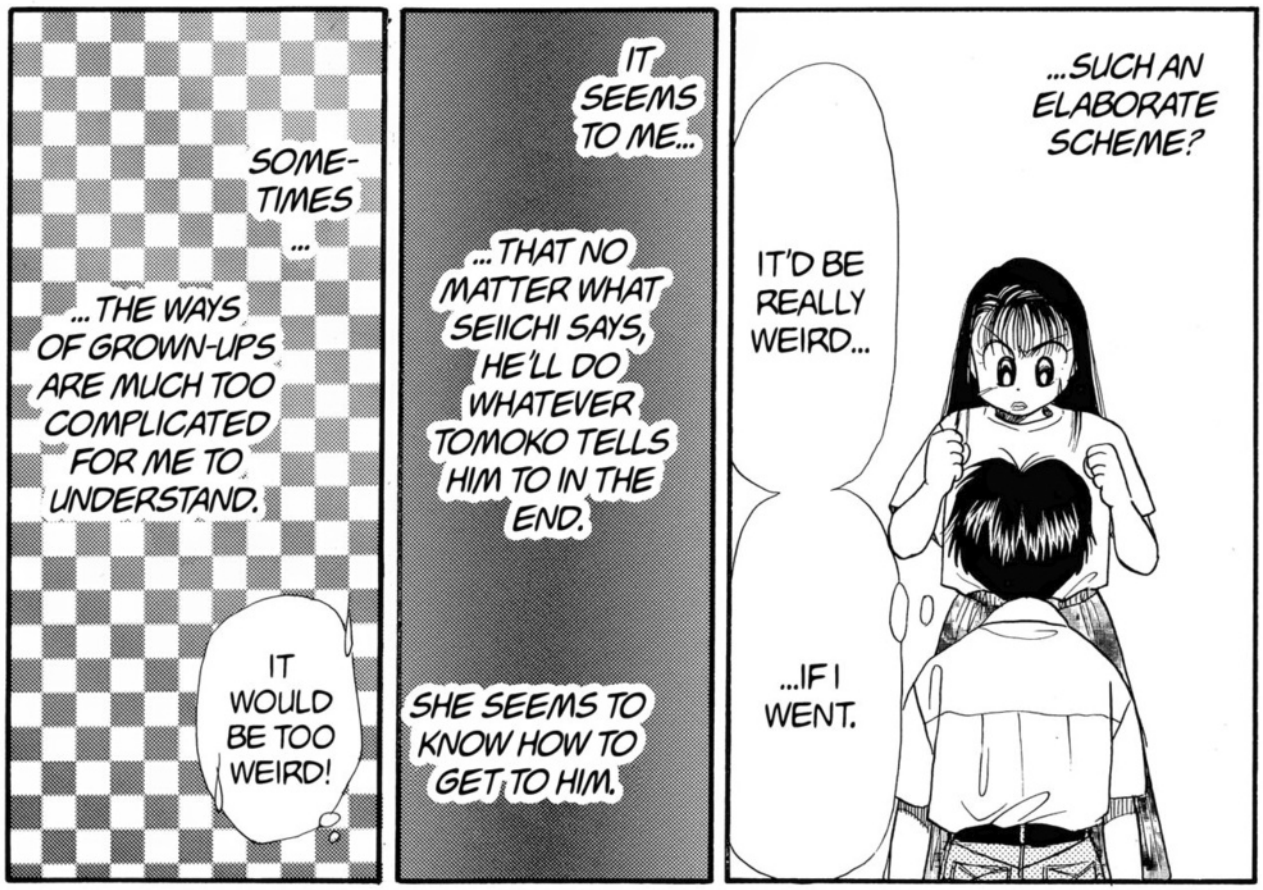

COMING.
SLAP
COMING.
SLAP


I THOUGHT SO. HERE.
THANKS.
SHE CAN READ SEIICHI'S MIND.

HAVE YOU COME TO GET MORE CLOTHES FOR HIM?
POP
YES, AND ALSO TO BRING YOU HIS CLOTHES TO WASH.
AH...

AND, UM...I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU.
HUH?
WHAT IS IT?
NOT ANOTHER NASTY MESSAGE ?

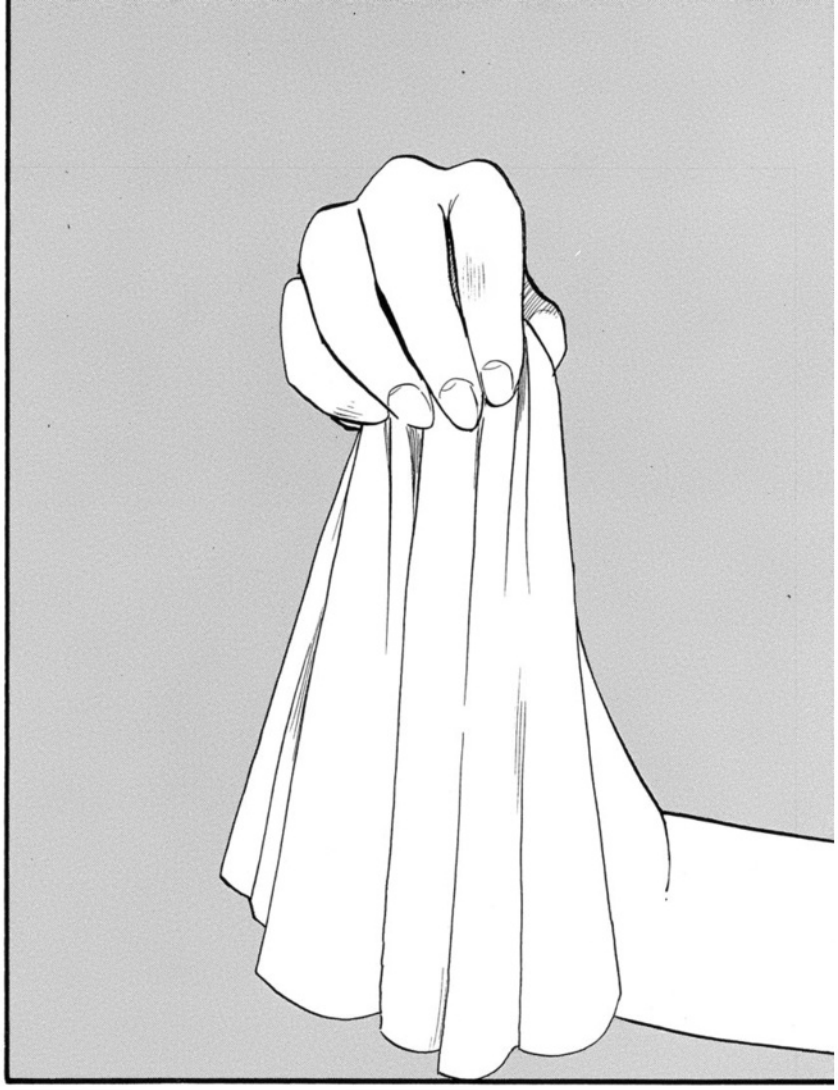


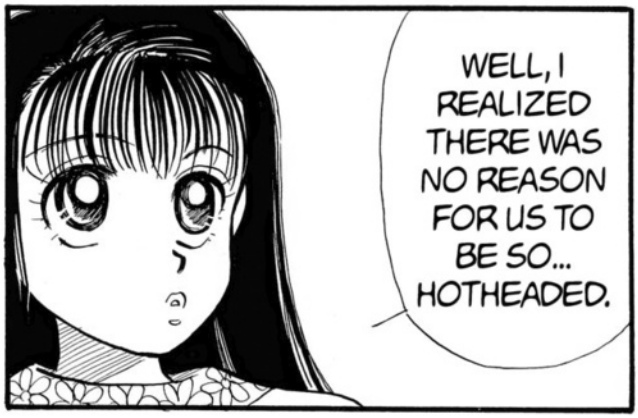


Chapter 52 / The End

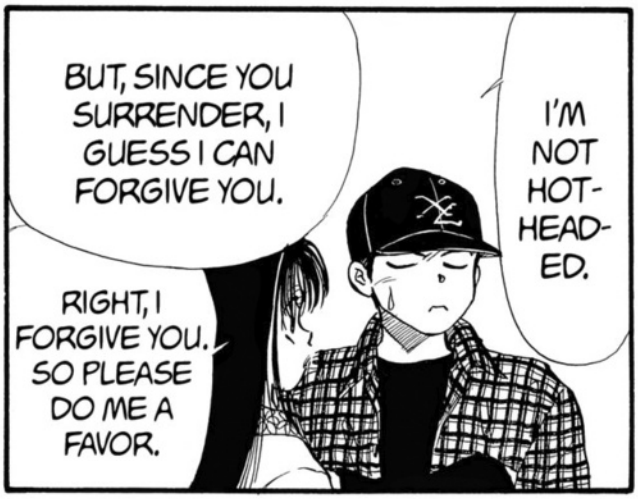
BABY & Me

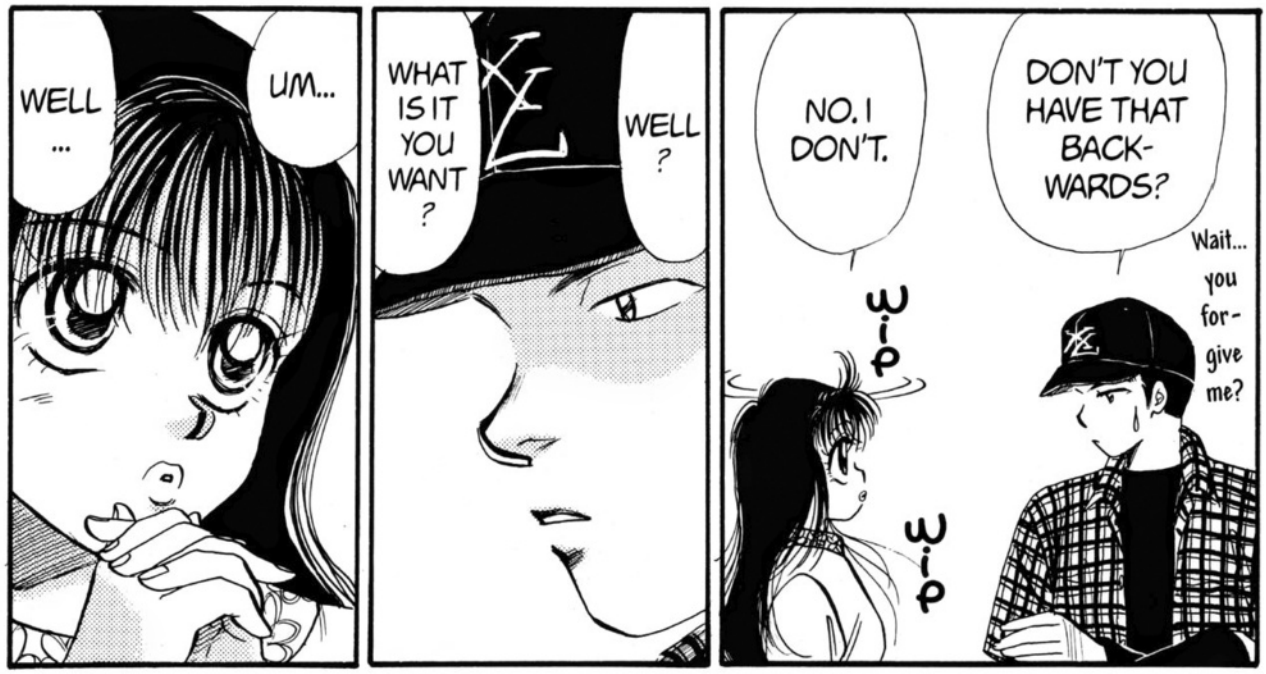
Chapter 53



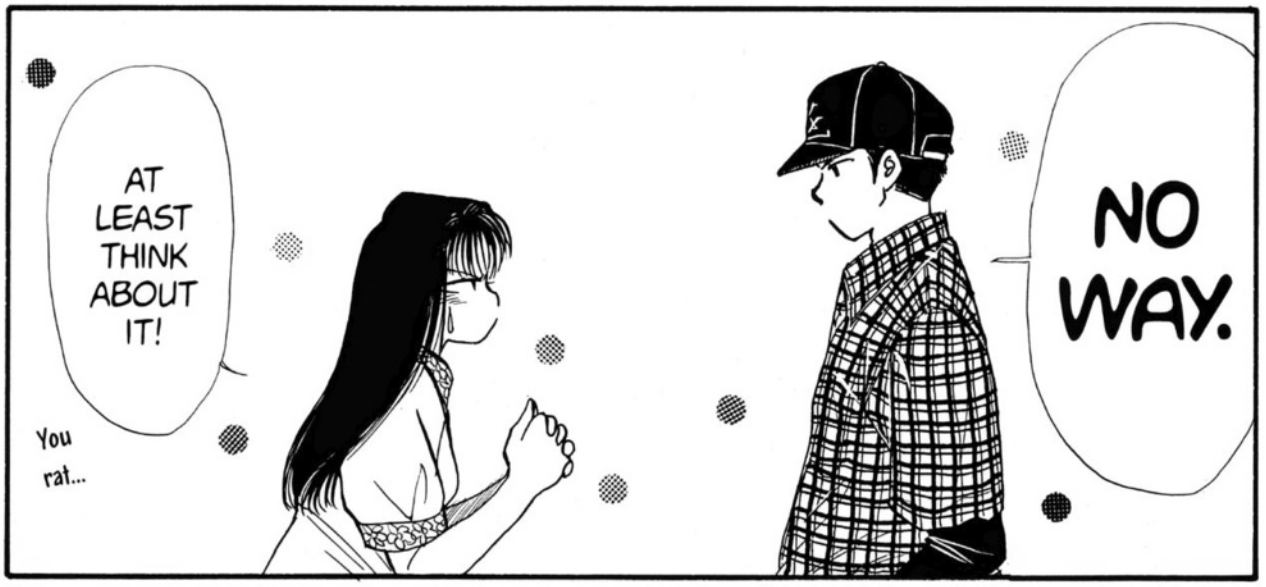

WELL, I REALIZED THERE WAS NO REASON FOR US TO BE SO... HOTHEADED.

WELL ?
WHY'D YOU CALL ME OVER?
DON'T YOU KNOW? IT'S A WHITE FLAG.
I SURREN-DER.
FWIP
FWIP
WHY ALL OF A SUDDEN ?


I'M NOT HOT-HEAD-ED.
BUT, SINCE YOU SURRENDER, I GUESS I CAN FORGIVE YOU.
RIGHT, I FORGIVE YOU. SO PLEASE DO ME A FAVOR.


WELL ...
UM...
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT ?
WELL ?
NO. I DON'T.
DON'T YOU HAVE THAT BACK-WARDS?
Wait... you for-give me?
Wip
Wip

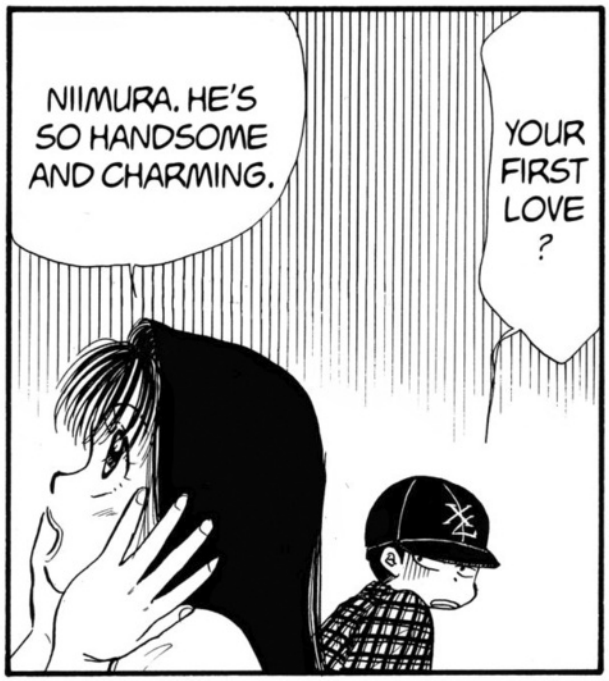
WILL YOU COME WITH ME TO MY CLASS REUNION?


AT LEAST THINK ABOUT IT!
You rat...
NO WAY.

I WANT TO MAKE UP, BUT I GUESS I'M JUST TOO STUBBORN.

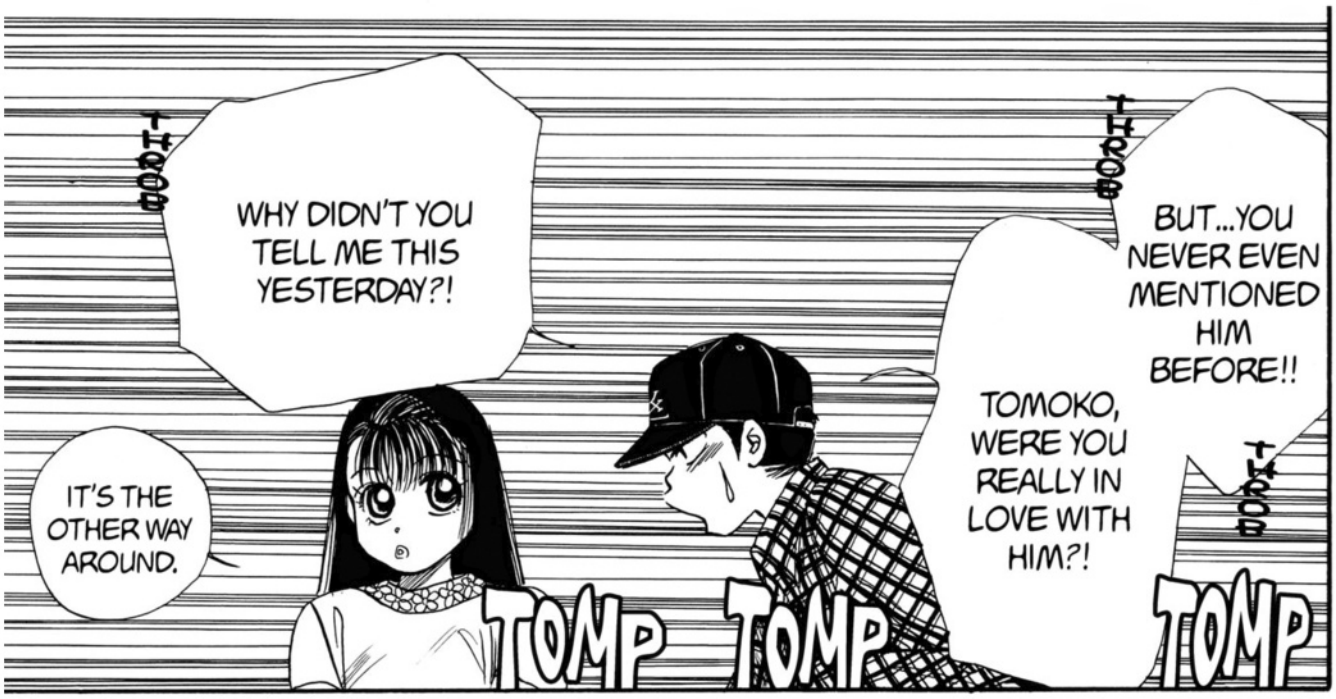
...I GUESS I'LL BE STAYING AT HARUMI'S AGAIN TONIGHT.
WHATEVER, TOMOKO. IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF COMPROMISING...
ZING
ZING

WHY SHOULD I GO?
WHAT'S THERE TO THINK ABOUT ?!
I WON'T KNOW ANYBODY.


NIIMURA. HE'S SO HANDSOME AND CHARMING.
YOUR FIRST LOVE ?

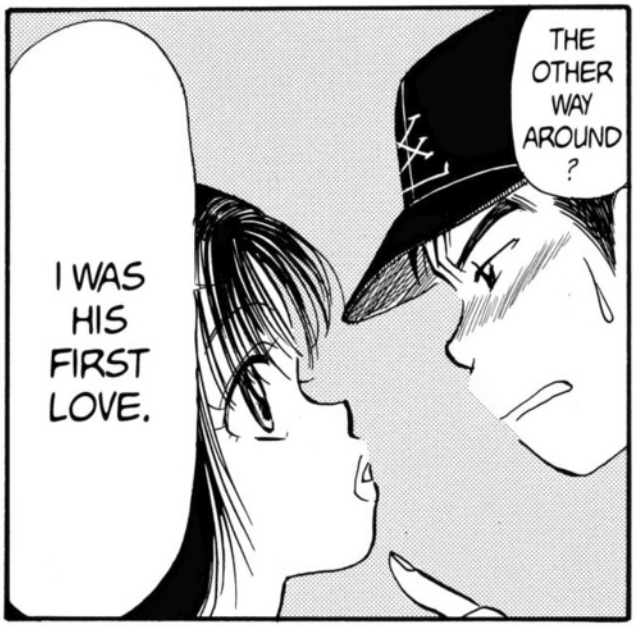
NIIMURA?
THE GUY I MET YESTER-DAY?
Hello.
I'm Shinobu Niimura.

MAYBE I'LL SEE MY FIRST LOVE THERE! AND MAYBE WE'LL DECIDE TO RUN AWAY TOGETHER!!
SIGH


THROB
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THIS YESTERDAY?!
IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
THROB
BUT...YOU NEVER EVEN MENTIONED HIM BEFORE!!
TOMOKO, WERE YOU REALLY IN LOVE WITH HIM?!
THROB
TOMP
TOMP
TOMP

Aaah!! What am I feeling relieved about?!
?

PHEW
AW, GEEZ.


THE OTHER WAY AROUND ?
I WAS HIS FIRST LOVE.

I'LL GO WITH YOU!
HURRY
OKAY!
GRAH

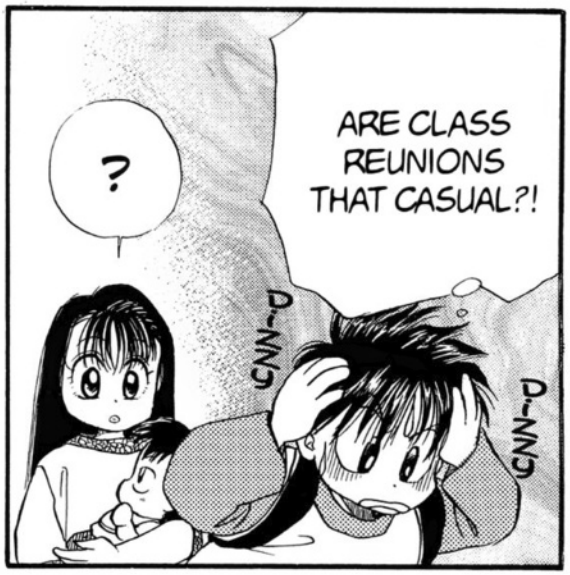
WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?!
WELL?!
IT'S STILL DAN-GER-OUS!!
MUTTER
MUTTER

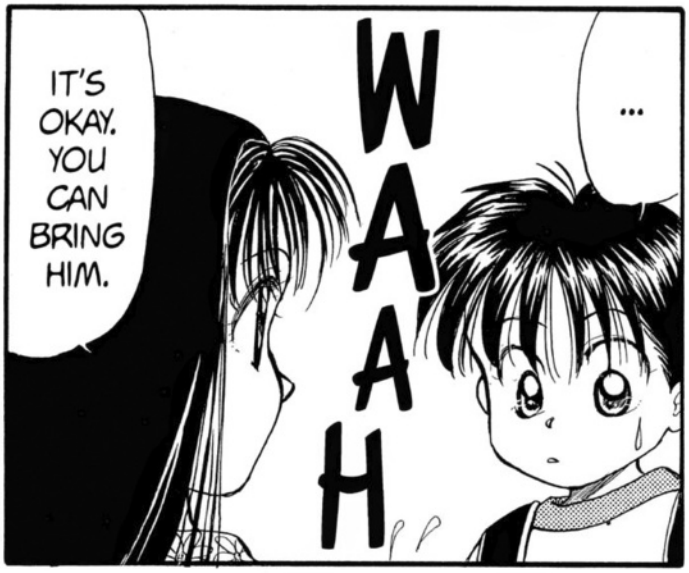
...IF I GO TOO?
SEIICHI SAYS HE'LL ONLY GO WITH YOU...
WHAT ?!
...ONLY ON ONE CONDI-TION!!
BUT...
HUH?
He always has to complicate things.
BWAZA ...
HG HG
SHE CAN READ SEIICHI LIKE A BOOK.
IT'S LIKE I TOLD YOU YESTERDAY.
THAT'S RIGHT.
MINOWU COME TOO.
...
UM...
WON'T YOU COME? PLEASE ?

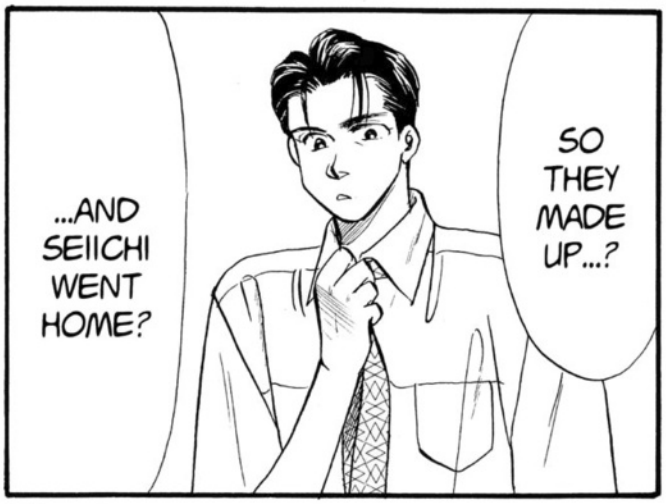
WHY NOT?
RIGHT, TOMO-KO?
YOU CAN'T GO.
Ga-ga.
WAAH

NO!! MINOWU GO TOO!!
WAAH
NO, MINORU ...
IT'S NOT A PLAY-GROUND !!

HUH?


?
ARE CLASS REUNIONS THAT CASUAL?!
D-NNG
D-NNG


IT'S OKAY. YOU CAN BRING HIM.
WAAH
...

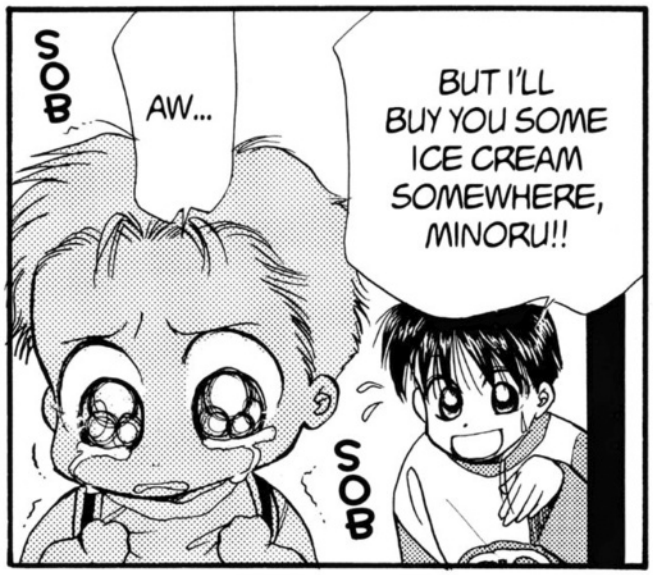

...AND SEIICHI WENT HOME?
SO THEY MADE UP...?

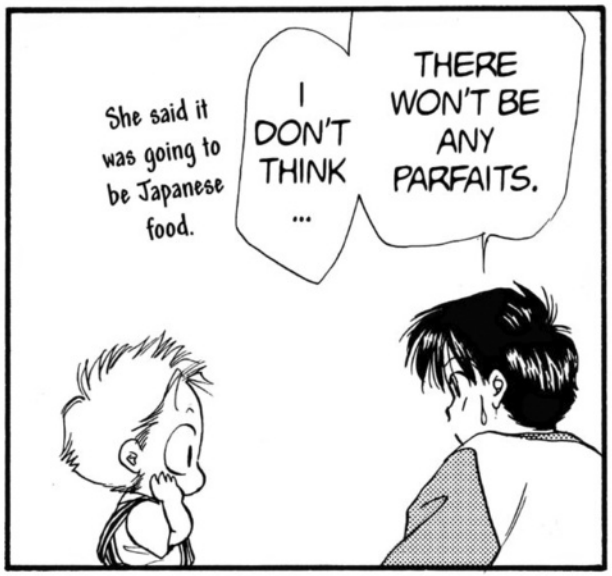
OH?

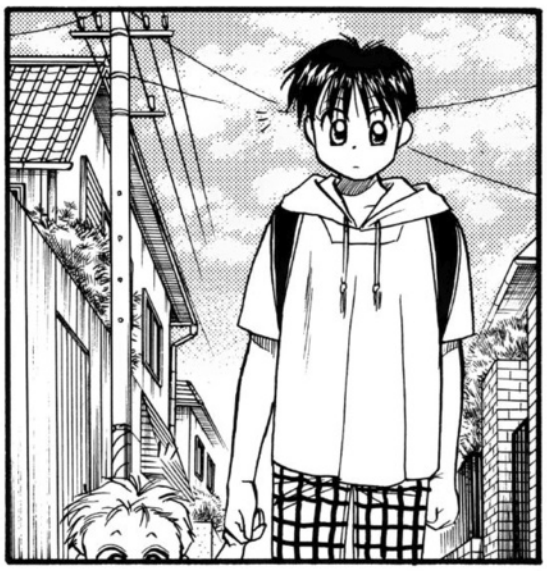
WIF WOTS OF CWEAM! YUM!
AHH!

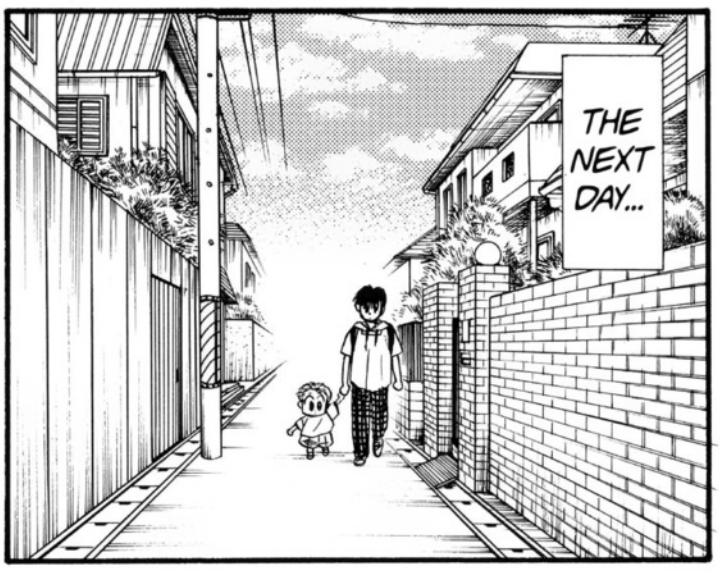
HEY...
MINOWU EAT PAHFEY!

BUT IT'S WEIRD FOR MINORU AND ME TO GO TO HER CLASS REUNION.
TRUE, BUT IT'S TOMOKO'S TREAT, RIGHT? WHY NOT GO?
You'll get to eat for free.


BUT I'LL BUY YOU SOME ICE CREAM SOMEWHERE, MINORU!!
AW...
SOB
SOB


THERE WON'T BE ANY PARFAITS.
I DON'T THINK ...
She said it was going to be Japanese food.




THE NEXT DAY...

Author's Note: Part 3

One day, I noticed my brother hadn't shaved, so I told him to just let it grow. I was hoping he'd grow a big thick beard like you see in foreign movies, but my brother's beard was very sparse. It looked like a worm-eaten lawn. Then our sister said, "That looks disgusting. Shave it off!!" I wonder if my brother was hurt by her words. Being a woman, I don't know.

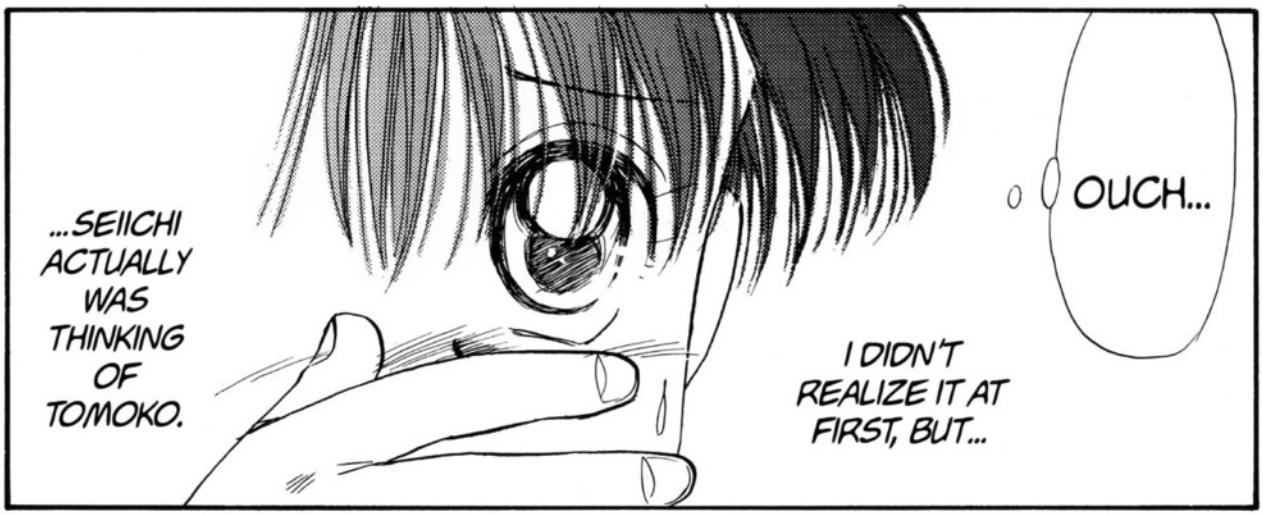
A quick lesson in Minoru-Speak.

"Th" becomes either "d," "z," or sometimes "f." Oddly, "s" sometimes becomes "th." "R" becomes "w." Leave out articles as desired.

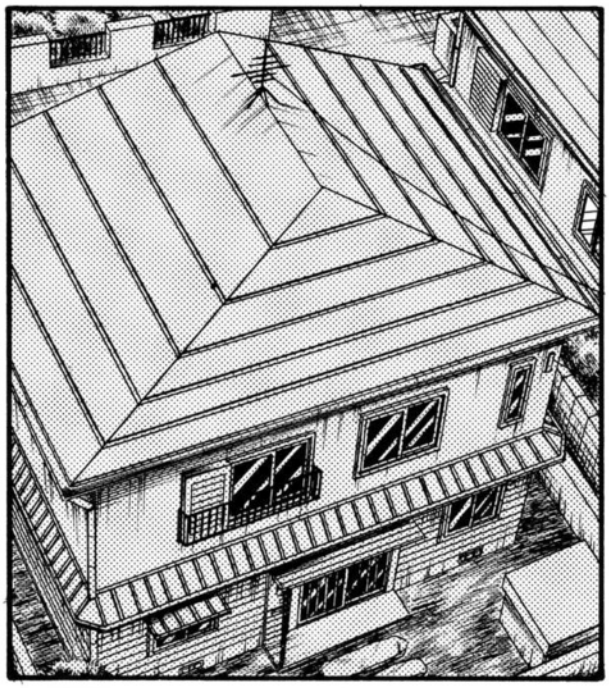
YOU'RE A KID. YOU WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND.
HERF.
HONK

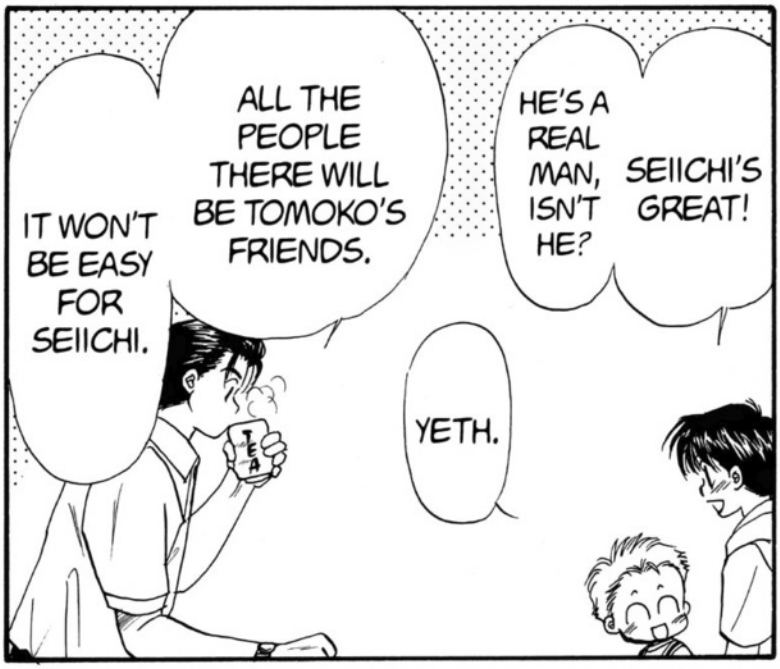
...

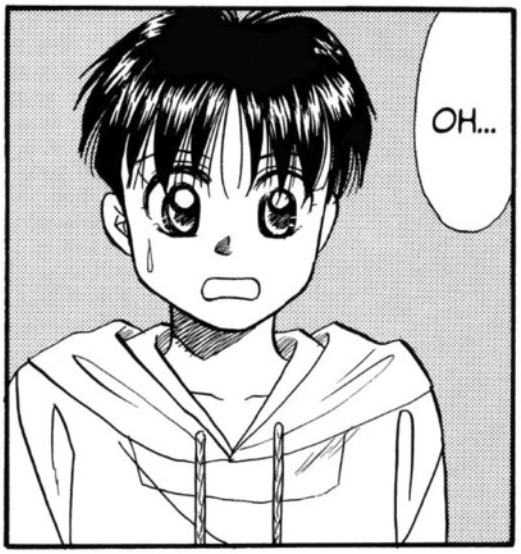
WHAT? WHY'D YOU BUY SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF?
YOU COULD'VE JUST WORN THE CLOTHES YOU HAVE.


OUCH...
I DIDN'T REALIZE IT AT FIRST, BUT...
...SEIICHI ACTUALLY WAS THINKING OF TOMOKO.

WELL, HE...
... PROBABLY DOESN'T WANT TOMOKO TO BE ASHAMED OF THE WAY HE LOOKS.
TEA

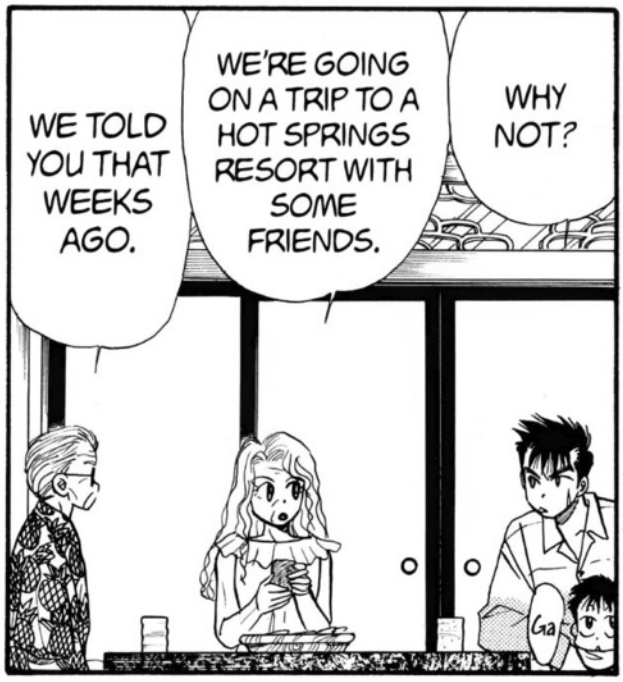



IT WON'T BE EASY FOR SEIICHI.
ALL THE PEOPLE THERE WILL BE TOMOKO'S FRIENDS.
HE'S A REAL MAN, ISN'T HE?
SEIICHI'S GREAT!
YETH.
TEA

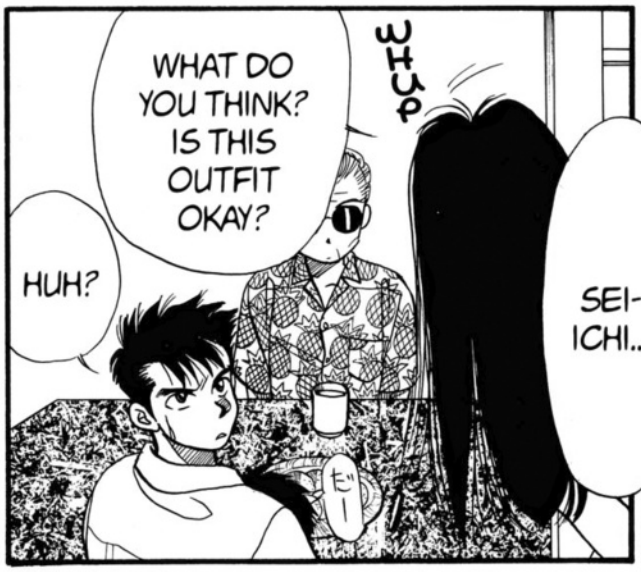

OH...

I WAS JUST TRYING TO MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER...
BABBLE
BABBLE
More like an animal
Kid
...

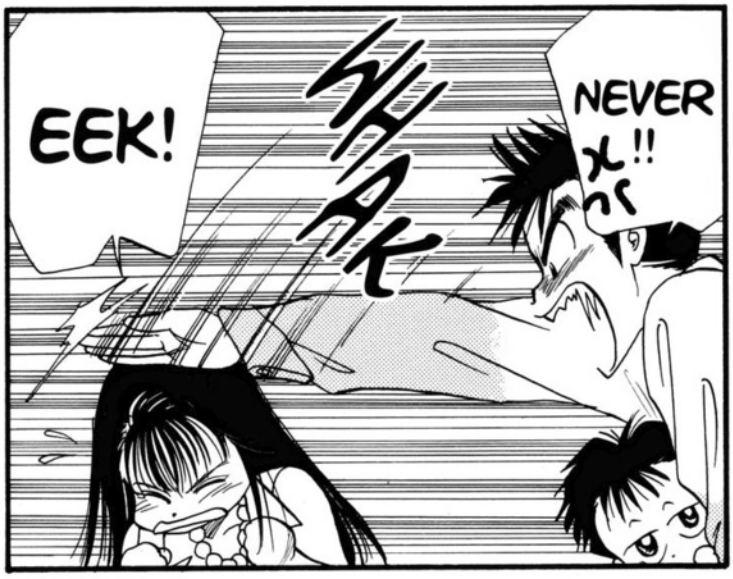
PEOPLE LIKE KIDS AND ANIMALS!
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
IT'LL BE EVEN HARDER FOR ME.
UH?


WE TOLD YOU THAT WEEKS AGO.
WE'RE GOING ON A TRIP TO A HOT SPRINGS RESORT WITH SOME FRIENDS.
WHY NOT?
Ga

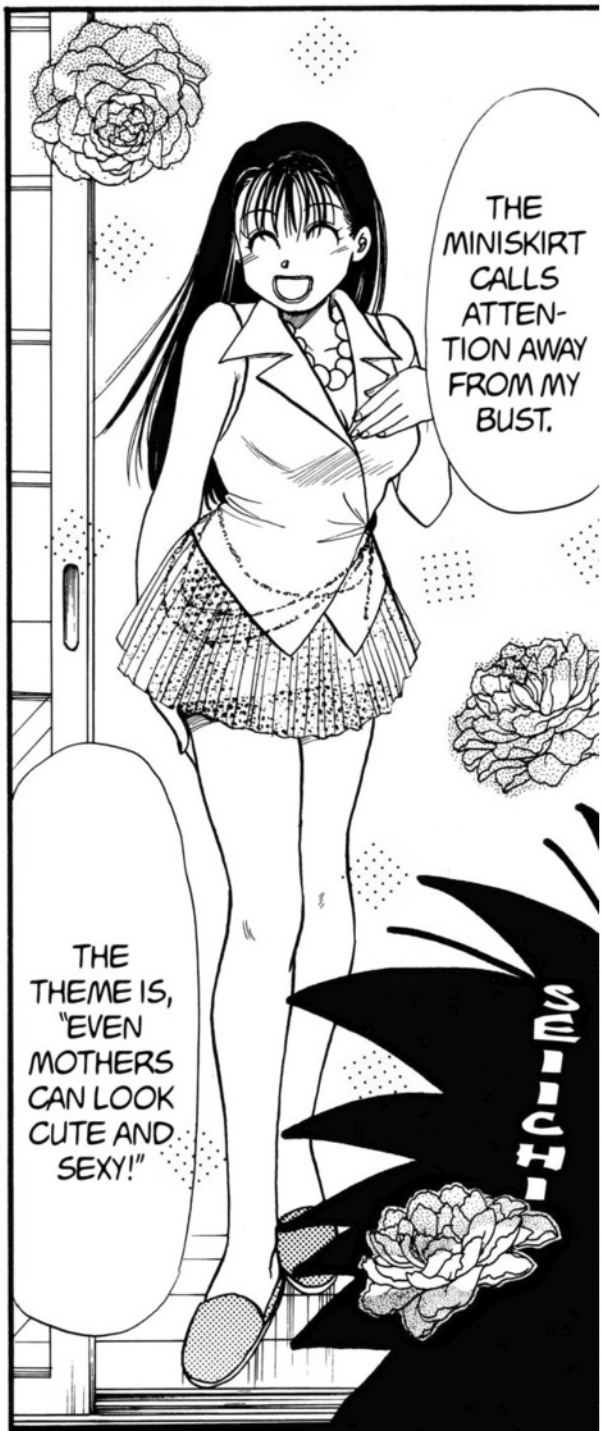
TOMOR-ROW?
WE CAN'T TAKE CARE OF TAICHI TOMOR-ROW.

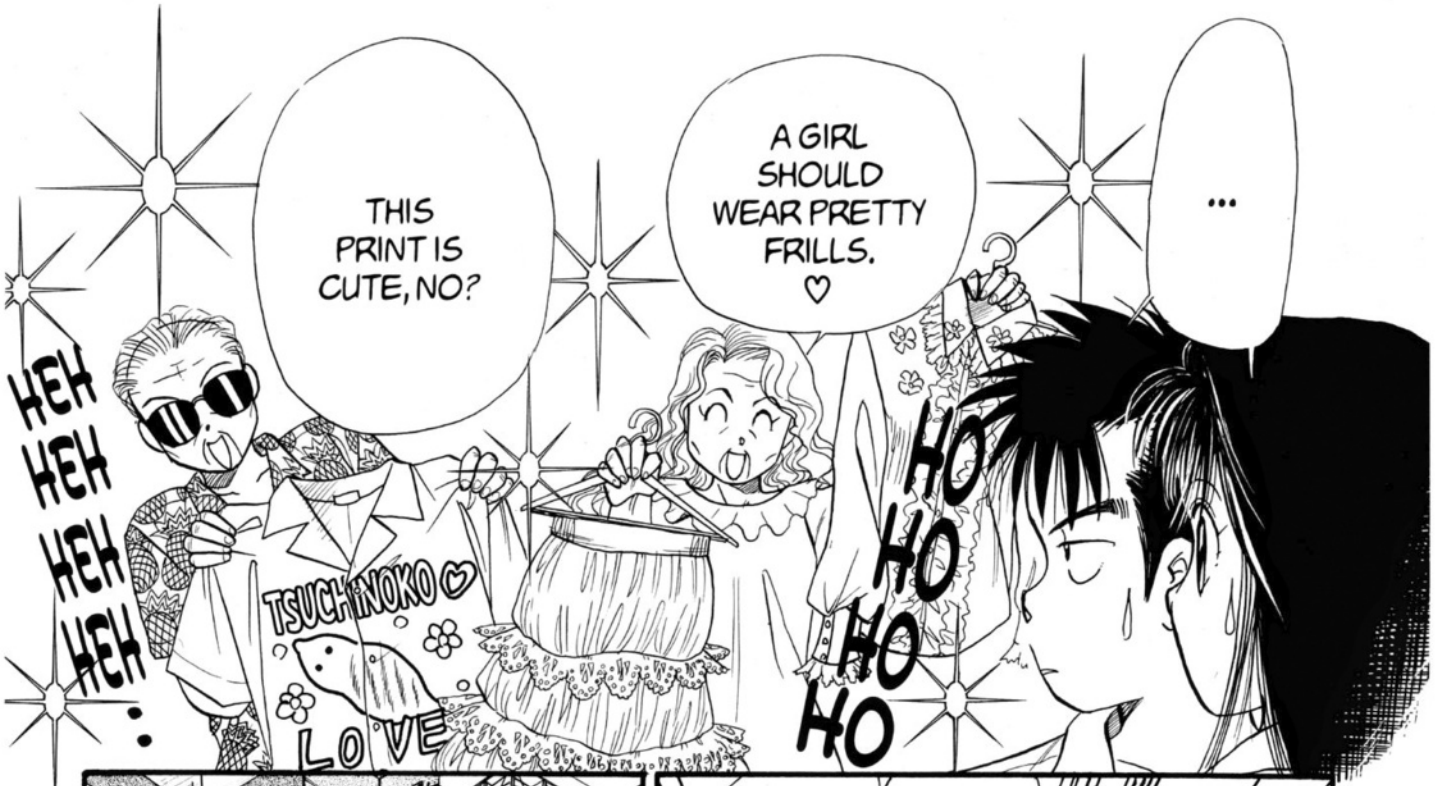

WHAT DO YOU THINK? IS THIS OUTFIT OKAY?
WHUP
HUH?
ピー

THEN WHAT'LL WE DO WITH TAICHI?
TMP
TMP
SEI-ICHI...
SEI-ICHI...
THAT'S YOUR PROB-LEM!


EEK!
WHAK
NEVER メ!!

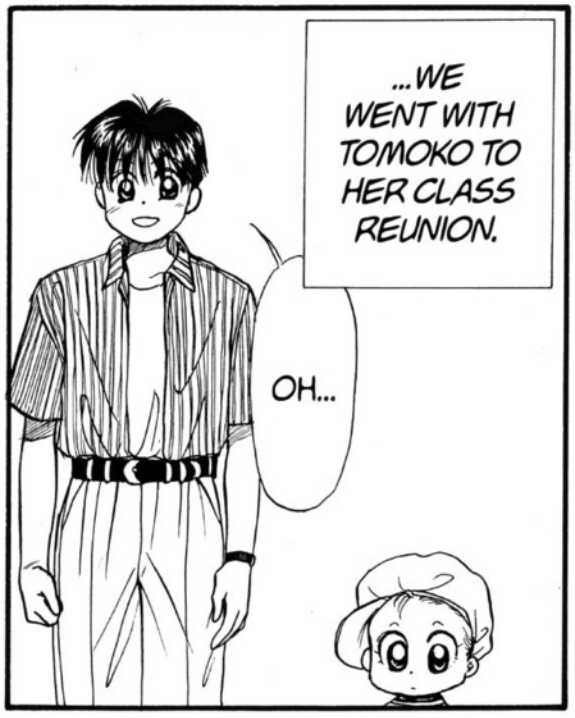
TOMOKO, IF YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE FINDING SOMETHING TO WEAR, I CAN LEND YOU SOME-THING.
ABSOLUTELY NOT! I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO DRESS LIKE THAT!!
OUCH...
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
Granny's hand


THE MINISKIRT CALLS ATTEN-TION AWAY FROM MY BUST.
THE THEME IS, "EVEN MOTHERS CAN LOOK CUTE AND SEXY!"
SEIICHI


THIS PRINT IS CUTE, NO?
A GIRL SHOULD WEAR PRETTY FRILLS. ♡
...
HEH HEH HEH HEH...
TSUCHINOKO ♡
LOVE
HO HO HO HO

SATURDAY EVENING ...
SAKABE

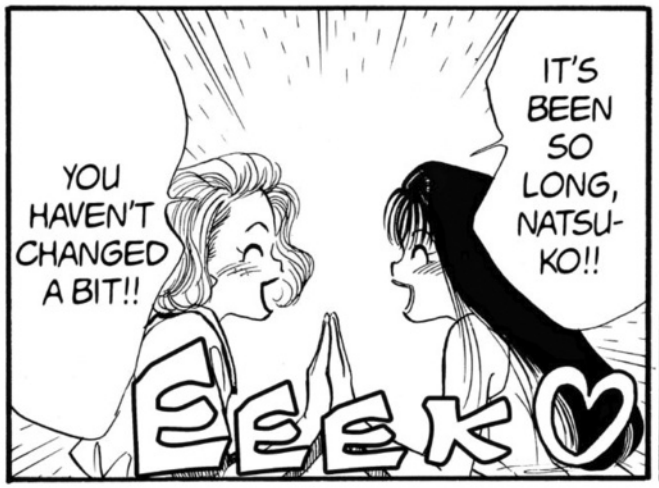
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEY, SEIICHI!!
Ugh.
SNUFF
SNUFF

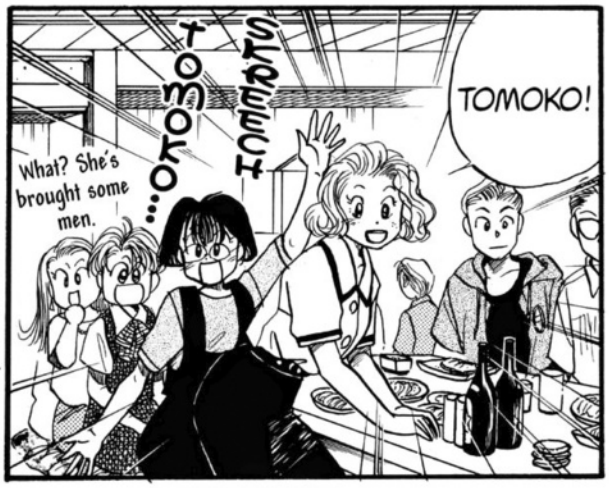

...WE WENT WITH TOMOKO TO HER CLASS REUNION.
OH...

I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO WEAR THOSE THINGS EITHER!!
KRK
PAT

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
YEAH, TOMOKO. WON'T THIS COST US A FORTUNE?
IN THE END, FOUR OF US ACCOMPANIED HER.
ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY?
Oh...

LOOKS LIKE A NICE PLACE.

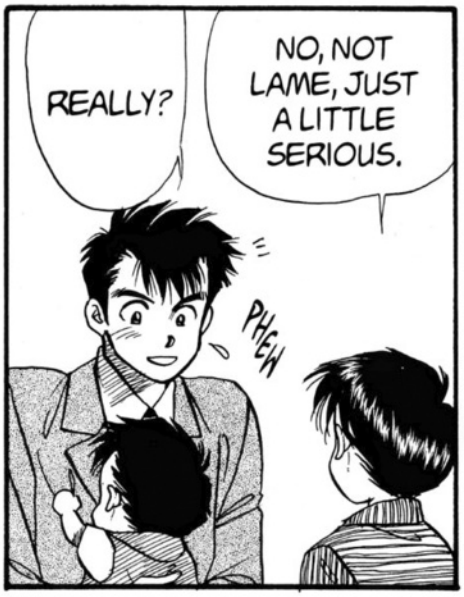

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT!!
IT'S BEEN SO LONG, NATSU-KO!!
EEEK


TOMOKO!
What? She's brought some men.
STREECH
TOMOTO...

DO I LOOK FUNNY?
HUH?

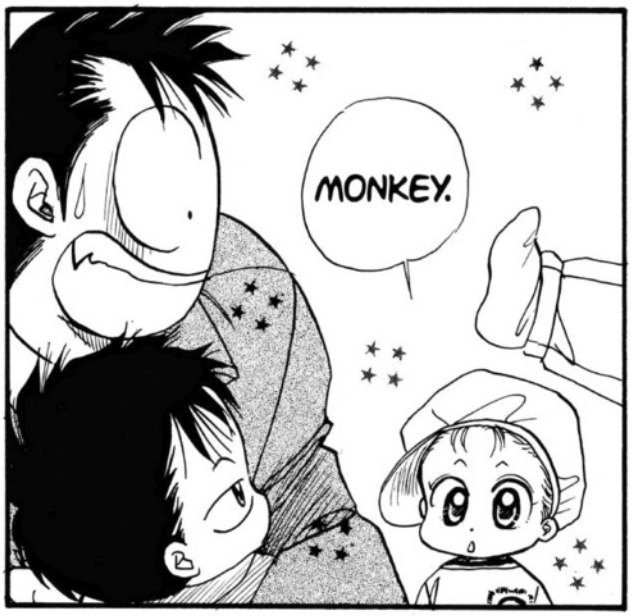
UM... TAKUYA...
HUH?

...
EEK
EEK
Da...


REALLY?
NO, NOT LAME, JUST A LITTLE SERIOUS.
PHEW

...

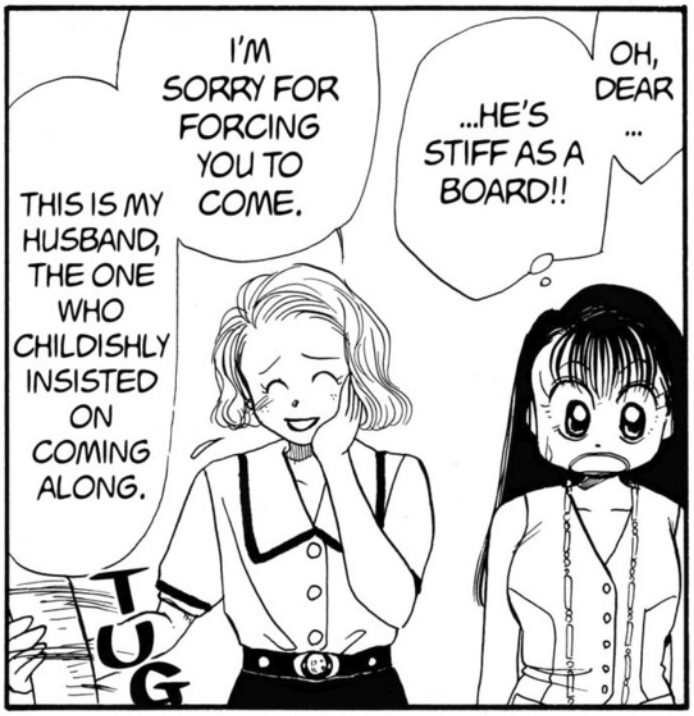
AT FIRST GLANCE, DO I LOOK LAME?
I MEAN...


MONKEY.

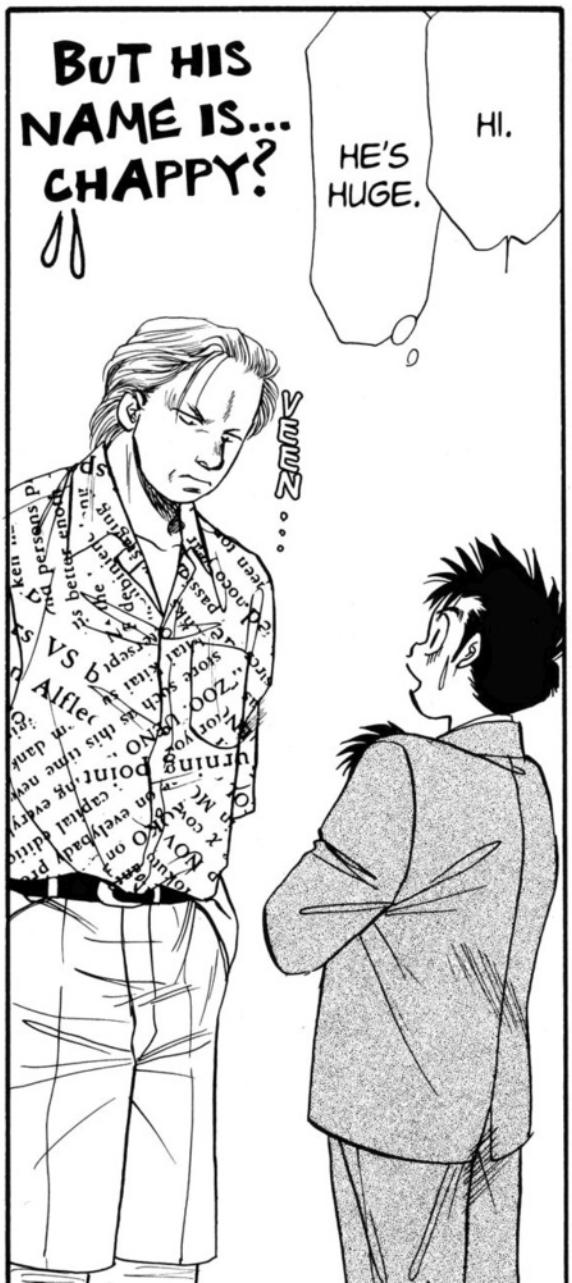
WHAT DO YOU THINK? DON'T I LOOK GOOD?
MINO-RU...
UBB?

WUZZ
THIS IS MY FRIEND NATSUKO.
SEIICHI, COME OVER HERE.
HOW DO YOU DO?
WUZZ

REALLY? A MONKEY?
MINO-RU...
GAH ...
HA HA HA...
TWO-ING


I'M SORRY FOR FORCING YOU TO COME.
THIS IS MY HUSBAND, THE ONE WHO CHILDISHLY INSISTED ON COMING ALONG.
OH, DEAR ...
...HE'S STIFF AS A BOARD!!
TUG

HOW DO YOU DO? I'M SEIICHI KIMURA.
THIS IS OUR SON TAICHI.
AND THESE ARE OUR FRIENDS.
HE'S SO...IN-TENSE.
DO
OM


BUT HIS NAME IS... CHAPPY?
HE'S HUGE.
HI.
VEEN...

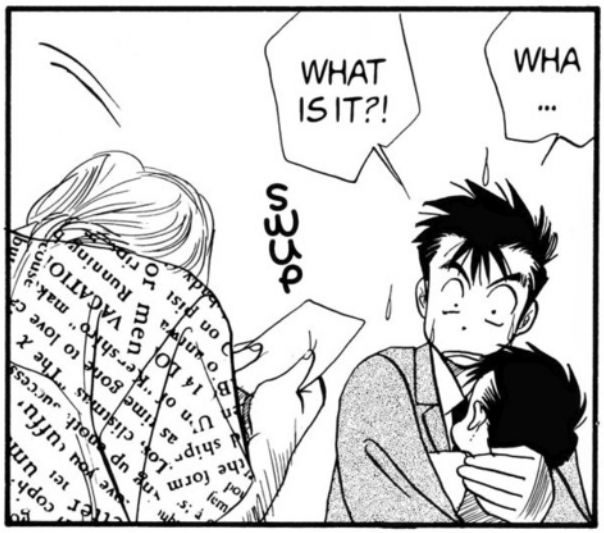
NICE TO MEET YOU.

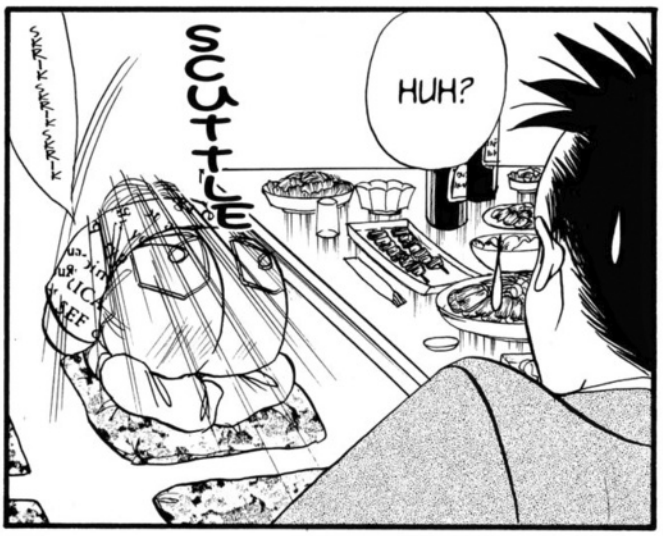
MY NAME IS CHAPPY GLEN-BIRD.
GLARE

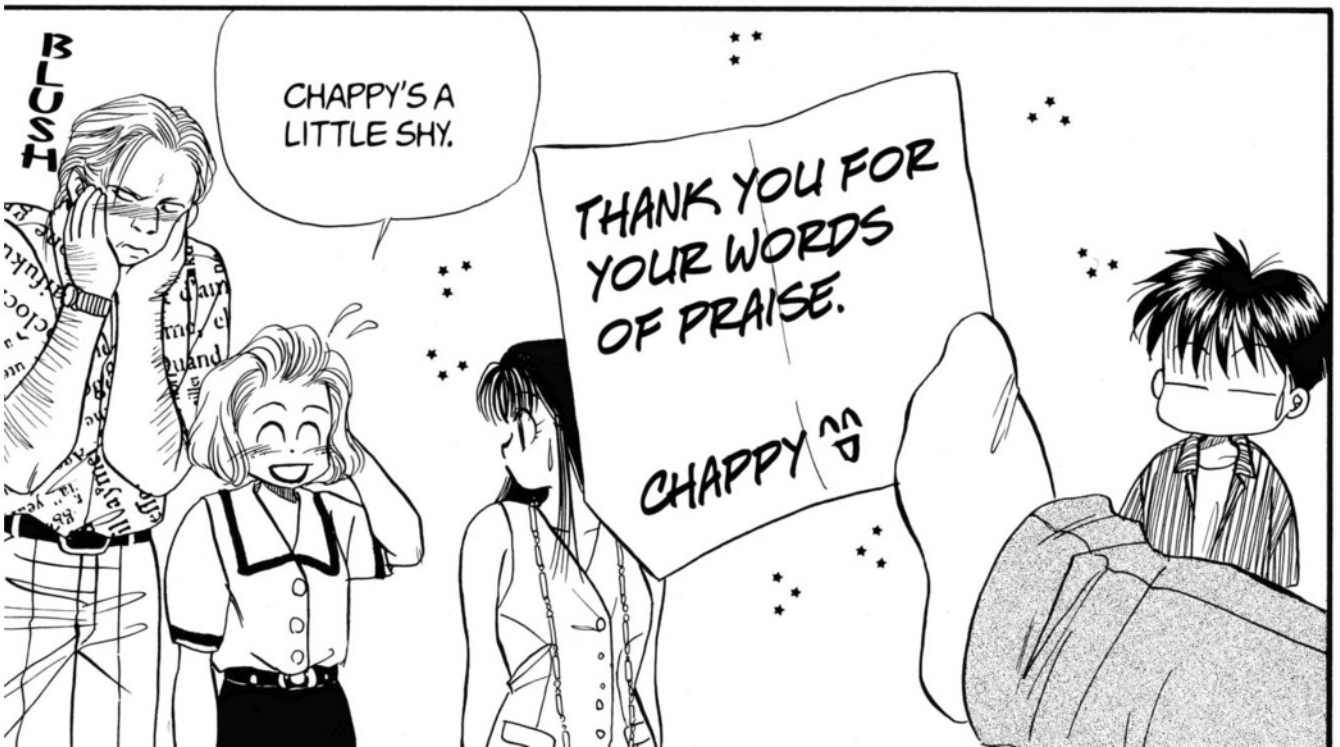
ACK

GARE

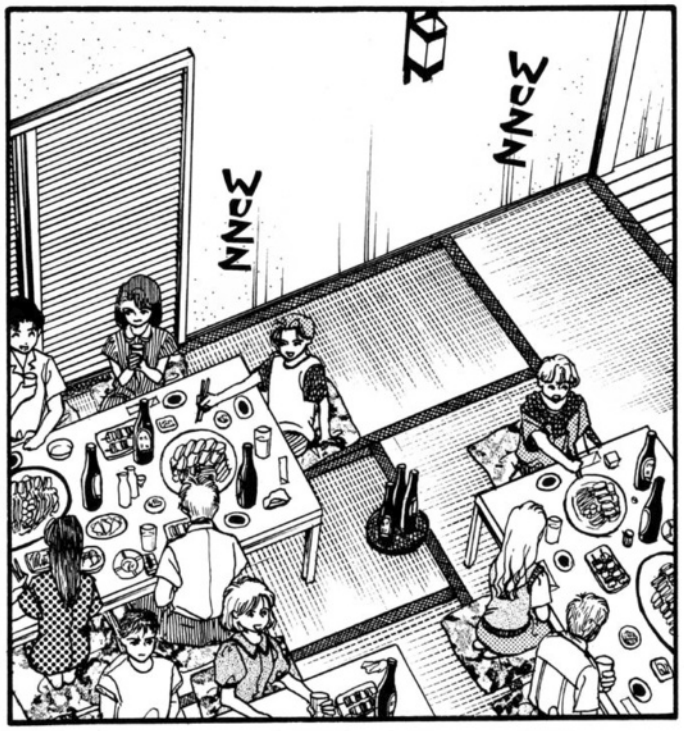
YOUR WORKOUT MUST BE BETTER THAN MINE.
WELL, YOU SURE LOOK STRONG.
THUMP


WHAT IS IT?!
WHA ...
SWUP

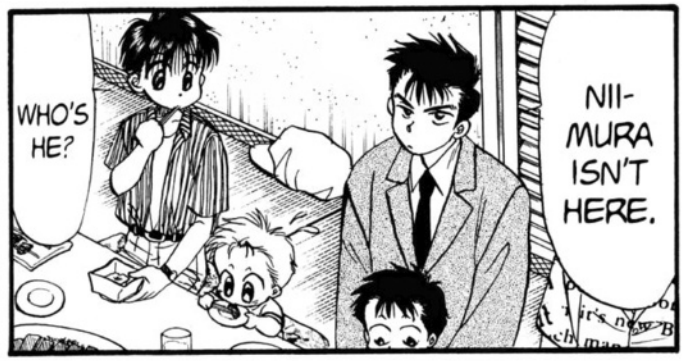

HUH?
SCUTTLE


BLUSH
CHAPPY'S A LITTLE SHY.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORDS OF PRAISE.
CHAPPY

OH?
A BIG STUPID JERK.
Ah...


WUNN
WUNN

MURMUR
OH... NIIMURA'S HERE...


WHO'S HE?
NII-MURA ISN'T HERE.

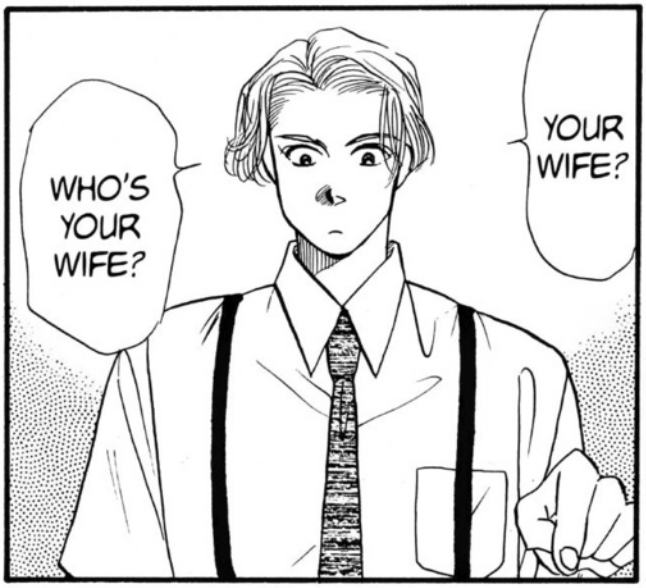
YACK
YACK
May I sit there?
THAT GUY? HE LOOKS PRETTY COOL.

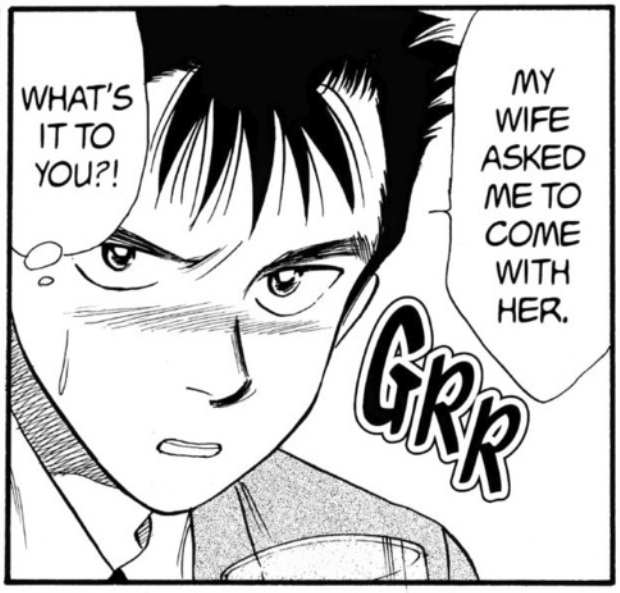
Medulla oblongata chop
WHAK
OW!

YOU'RE LATE, NIIMURA.
SORRY. I HAD TO WORK LATE.
THE TEACHER'S NOT HERE YET.

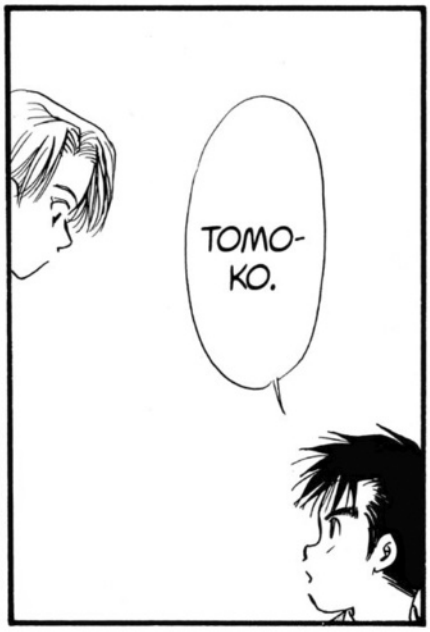
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ?
...THE GUY I MET THE OTHER DAY?
AREN'T YOU...
THAT'S RIGHT.

HUH?


WHO'S YOUR WIFE?
YOUR WIFE?

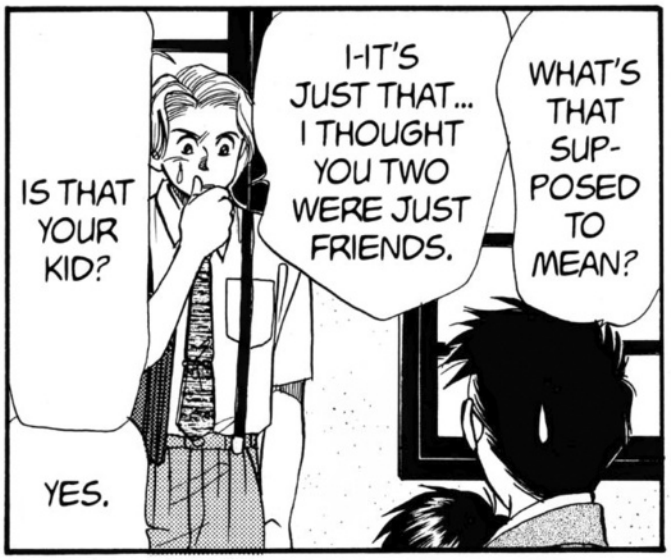

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?!
MY WIFE ASKED ME TO COME WITH HER.
GRR

YOU'RE KIDDING !!


TOMO-KO.

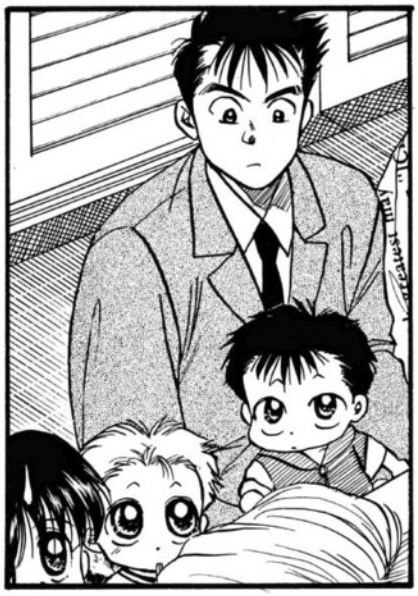
...

OH.
SIGH
WOW...

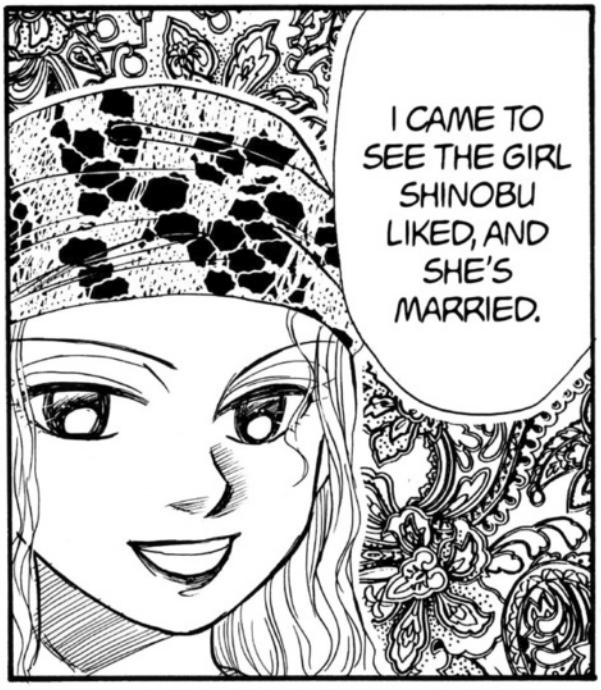

IS THAT YOUR KID?
YES.
I-IT'S JUST THAT... I THOUGHT YOU TWO WERE JUST FRIENDS.
WHAT'S THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN?

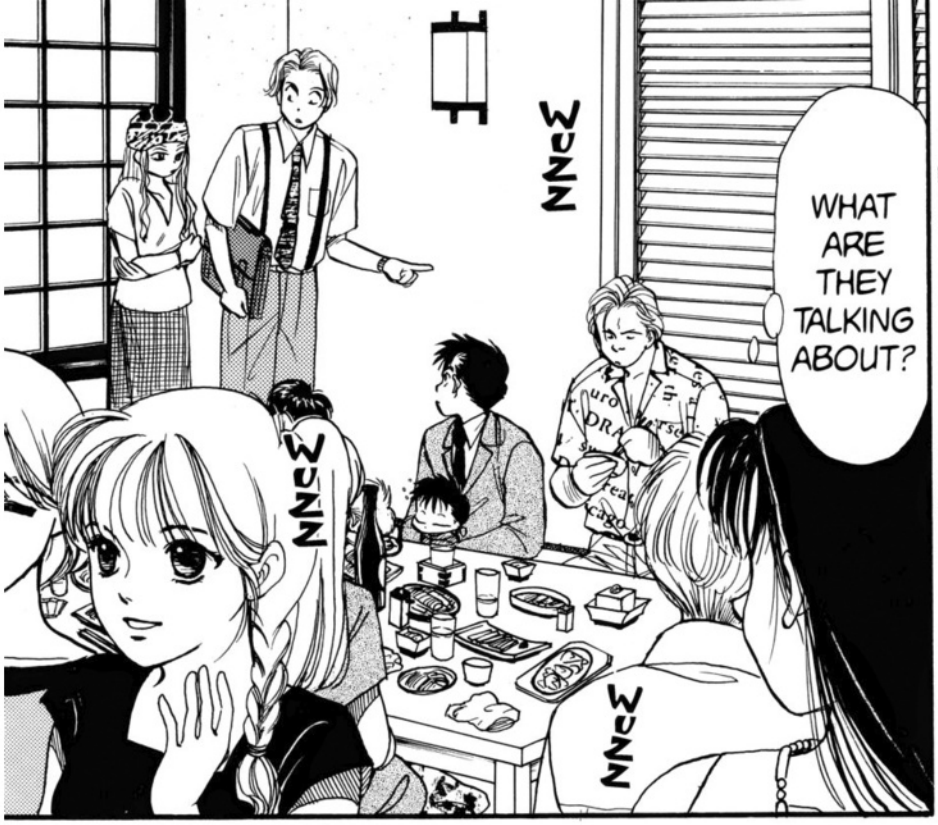
WHAT A LAUGH.

HEE HEE



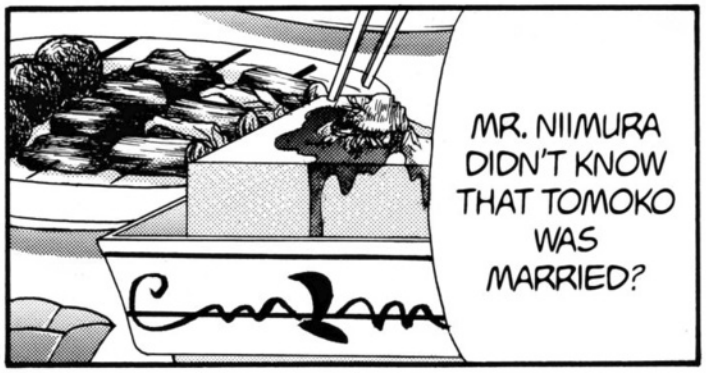
YOUR GIRL-FRIEND ?
BUT YOU MADE SUCH A FUSS WHEN I INSISTED ON COMING.
AND THERE ARE LOTS OF RANDOM PEOPLE HERE.
NO, I DIDN'T ...
KAK KAK KAK KAK


I CAME TO SEE THE GIRL SHINOBU LIKED, AND SHE'S MARRIED.


WUZZ
WUZZ
WUZZ
WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?

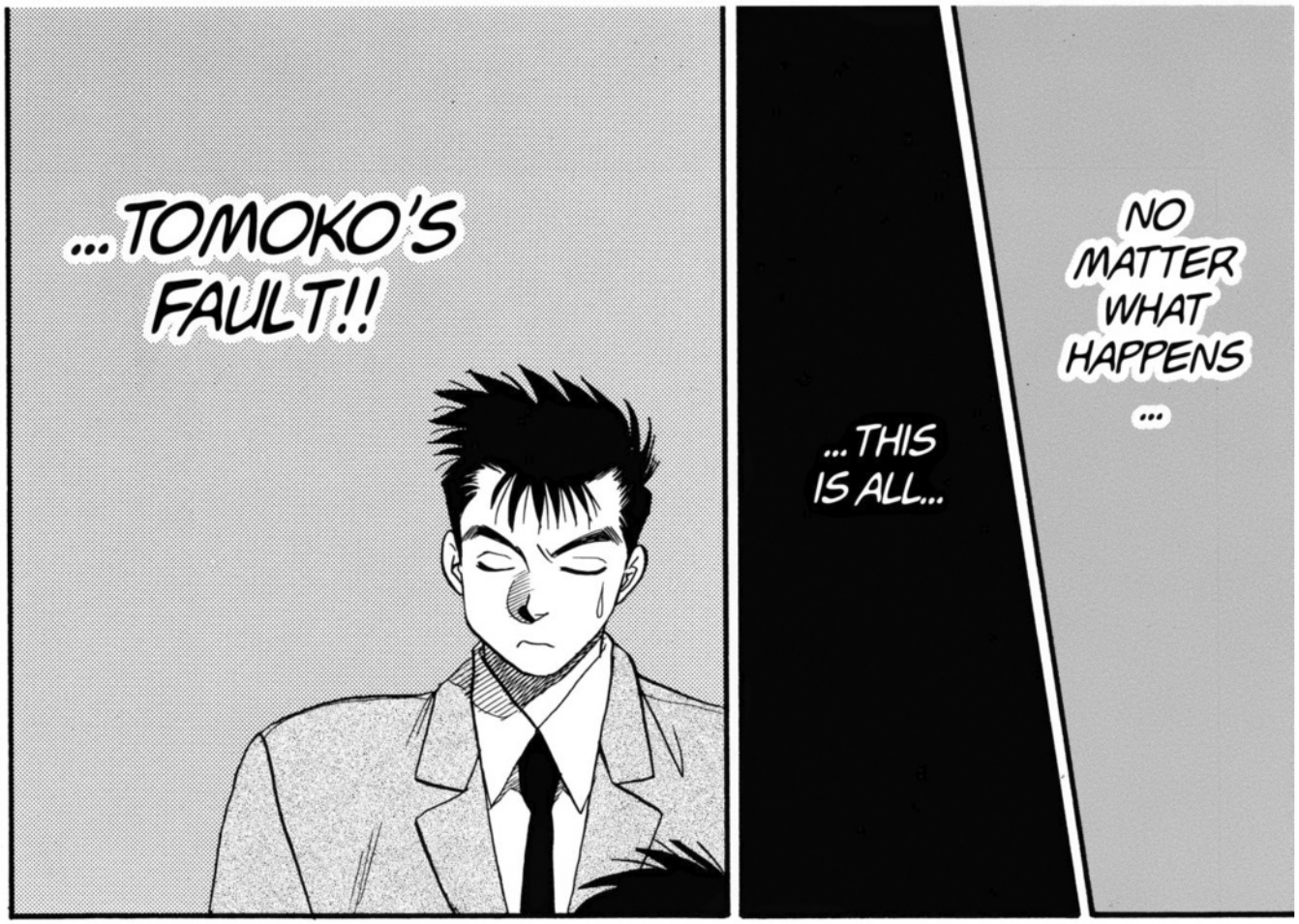
...

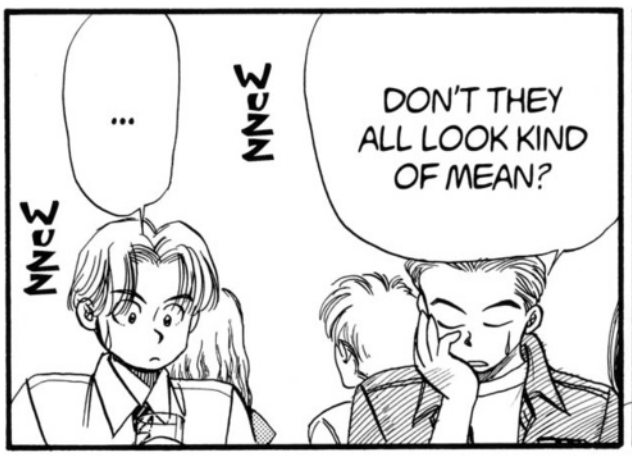
...
WUZZ
WUZZ


MR. NIIMURA DIDN'T KNOW THAT TOMOKO WAS MARRIED?

HE LOOKS A LITTLE SCARY.
I WONDER IF HE'S ANGRY.

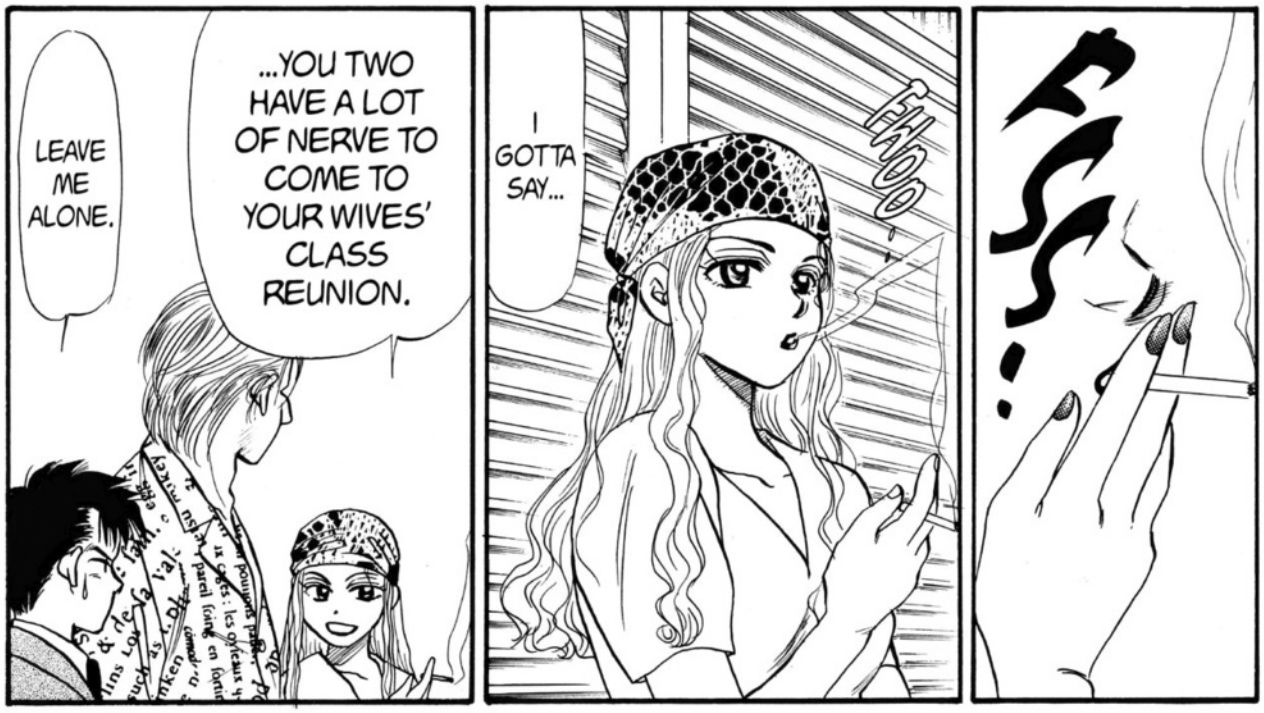
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE HE'S A LITTLE SLOW.
BUT DIDN'T HE WONDER WHO YOU WERE?
LOOKS THAT WAY.

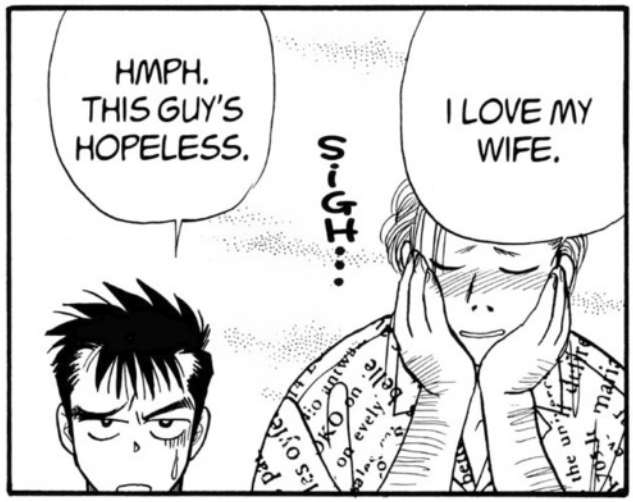

...TOMOKO'S FAULT!!
...THIS IS ALL...
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS ...

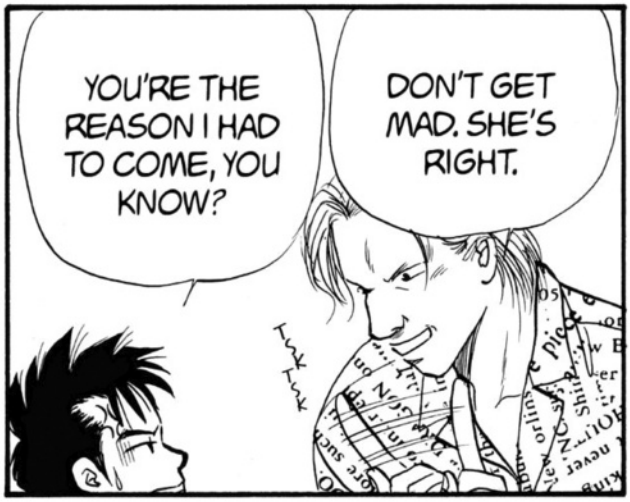

...
WUNN
DON'T THEY ALL LOOK KIND OF MEAN?
WUNN

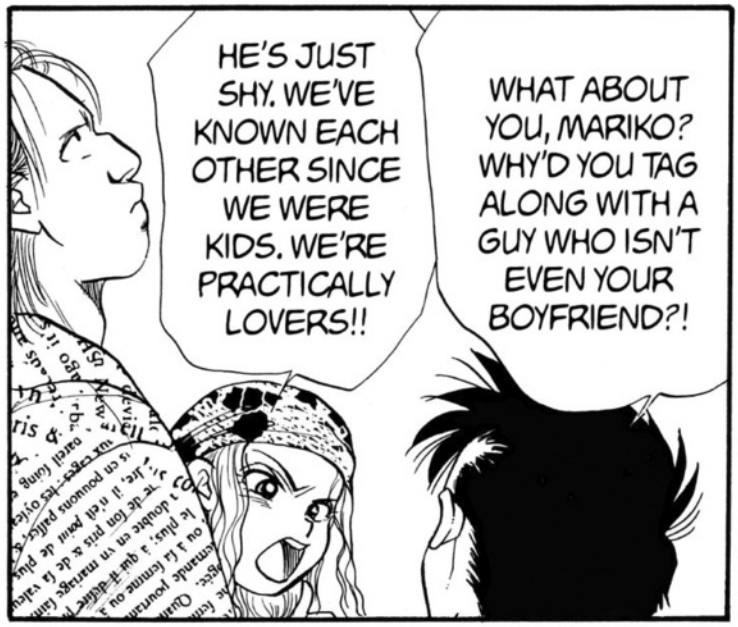
CHECK OUT THOSE TAG-ALONGS OVER THERE.
WUNN
HUH?
WUNN
HEY...

VEEN
VEEN
YEAH, THEY DO.

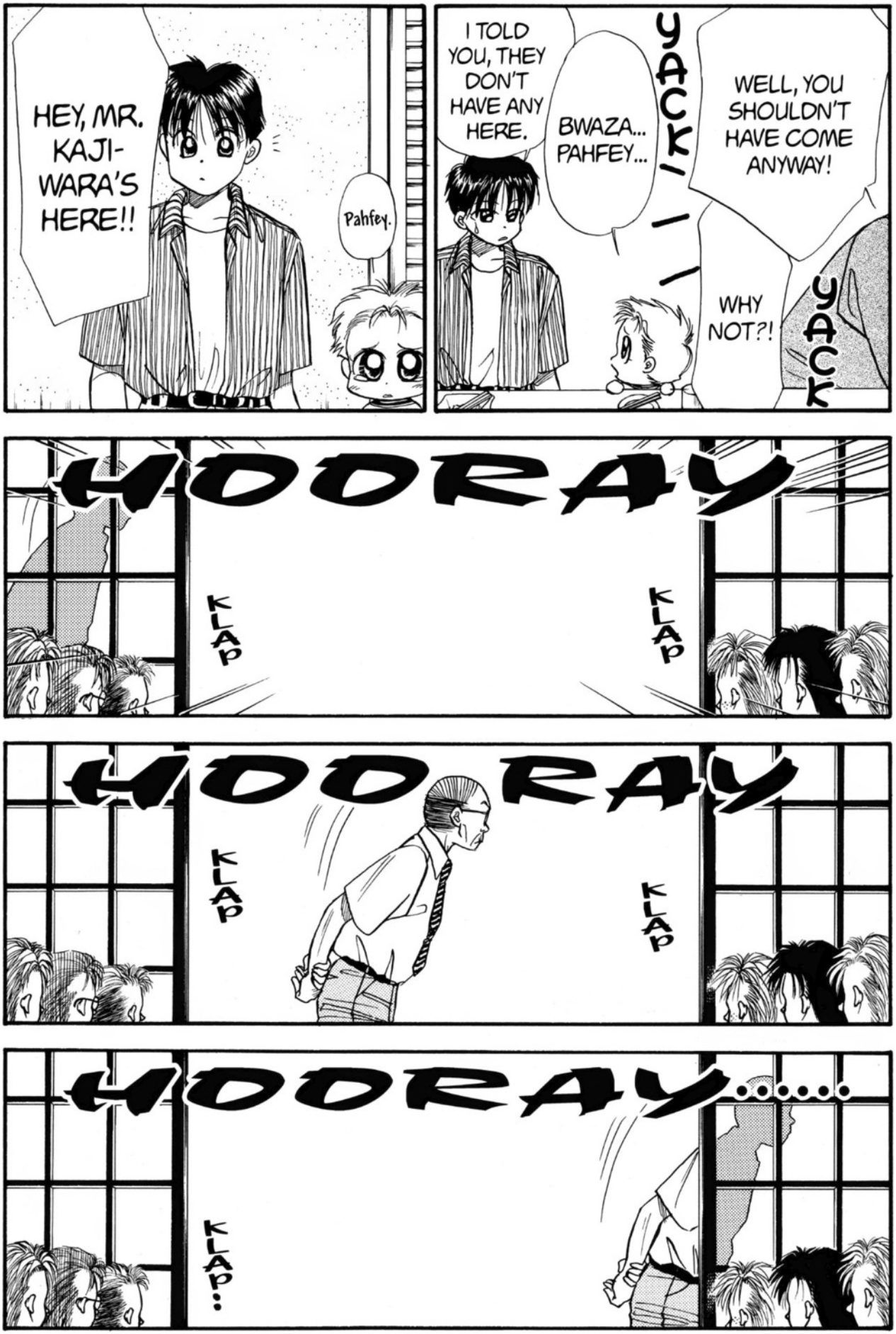

LEAVE ME ALONE.
...YOU TWO HAVE A LOT OF NERVE TO COME TO YOUR WIVES' CLASS REUNION.
I GOTTA SAY...
FHOO
FSSS!

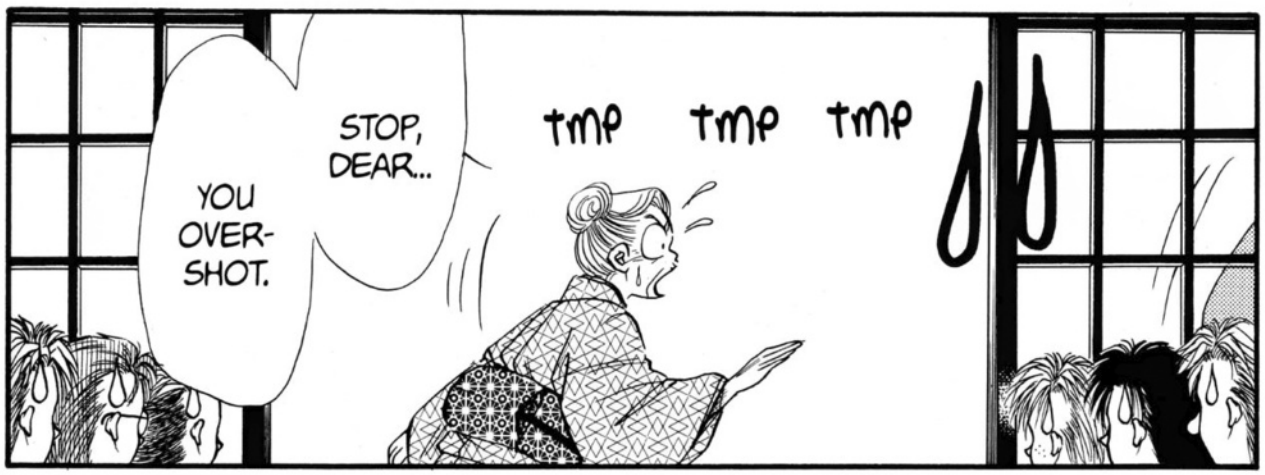

HMPH. THIS GUY'S HOPELESS.
SIGH...
I LOVE MY WIFE.


YOU'RE THE REASON I HAD TO COME, YOU KNOW?
DON'T GET MAD. SHE'S RIGHT.
TUK TUK


HE'S JUST SHY. WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE WE WERE KIDS. WE'RE PRACTICALLY LOVERS!!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MARIKO? WHY'D YOU TAG ALONG WITH A GUY WHO ISN'T EVEN YOUR BOYFRIEND?!

ER... WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I'M MARIKO. MARIKO KUSAKABE.


HEY, MR. KAJI-WARA'S HERE!!
Pahfey.
I TOLD YOU, THEY DON'T HAVE ANY HERE.
BWAZA... PAHFEY...
YACK!
WELL, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME ANYWAY!
WHY NOT?!
YACK
HOORAY
KLAP
KLAP
HOORAY
KLAP
KLAP
HOORAY.....
KLAP!

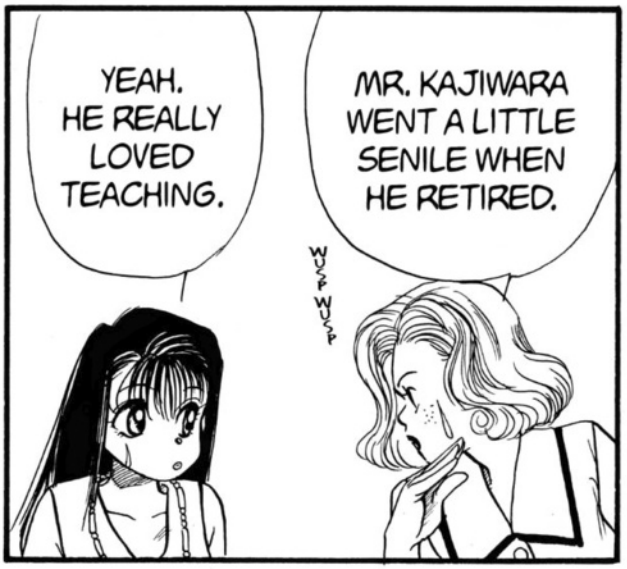

YOU OVER-SHOT.
STOP, DEAR...
tmp tmp tmp

HOORAY!
ONCE MORE--HOORAY!

NOW THAT MR. KAJIWARA IS HERE...
WELL ...

THANKS.
SMILE
SMILE

DRINK, MOCHI-ZUKI?


YEAH. HE REALLY LOVED TEACHING.
MR. KAJIWARA WENT A LITTLE SENILE WHEN HE RETIRED.
WUSP WUSP

AND YOU BROUGHT YOUR LOVELY GIRLFRIEND.

WHAT? DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
...

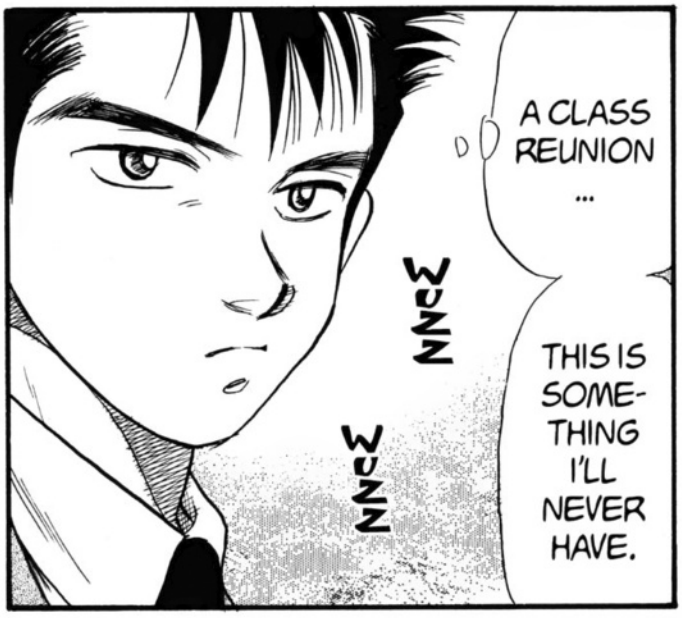
YES.
SO, YOU'RE MAR-RIED?
YES?
MOCHI-ZUKI...
BLUP BLUP

...

?
DON'T ASK ME...

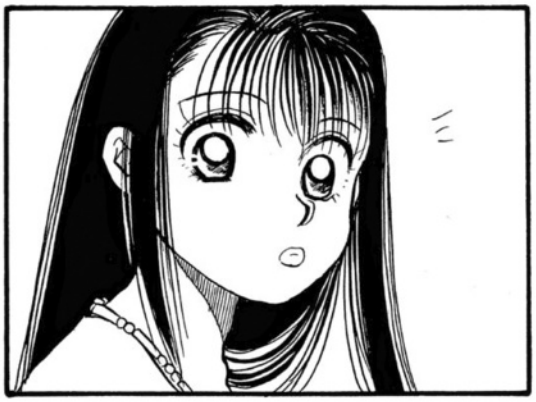
ME? WHY?
SHE CAME TO HAVE A LOOK AT YOU.

HUH?
LOOK.
YOUR WIFE AND SHINOBU ARE HAVING A FRIENDLY CHAT.


A CLASS REUNION ...
WUNN
WUNN
THIS IS SOME-THING I'LL NEVER HAVE.

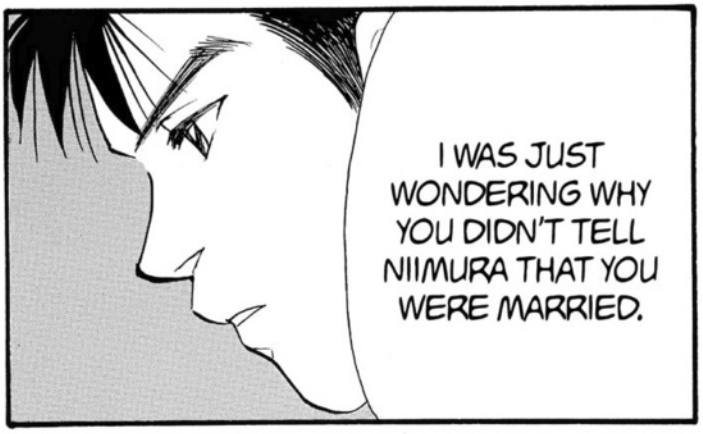
WELL...
THE WHAT?
SHINOBU LIKES HER... AND SHE HID THE FACT THAT SHE WAS MARRIED!
I DON'T LIKE IT!!
WUZZ
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT.
WUZZ
A little forced
LAY DOWN THE LAW!!
...
WUZZ
WUZZ
WHAT IF THEY DECIDE TO HAVE AN AFFAIR?!
SHE LED HIM ON!
...
HUH?
TAKE TAICHI FOR A MINUTE.
TAKU-YA...
...

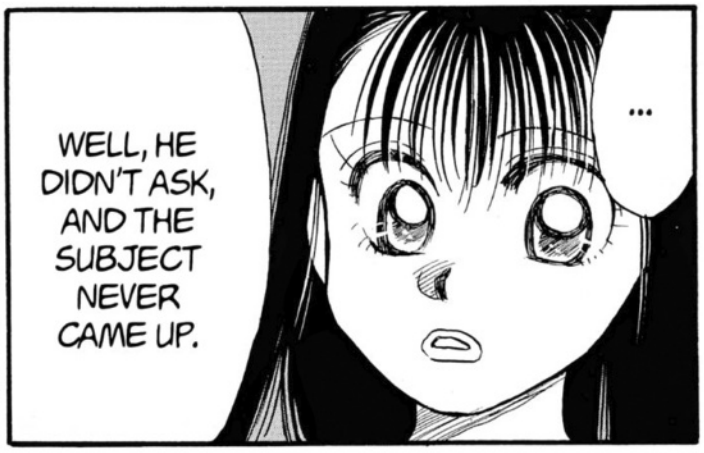
WHAT'S WRONG? DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?
UM... WELL ...

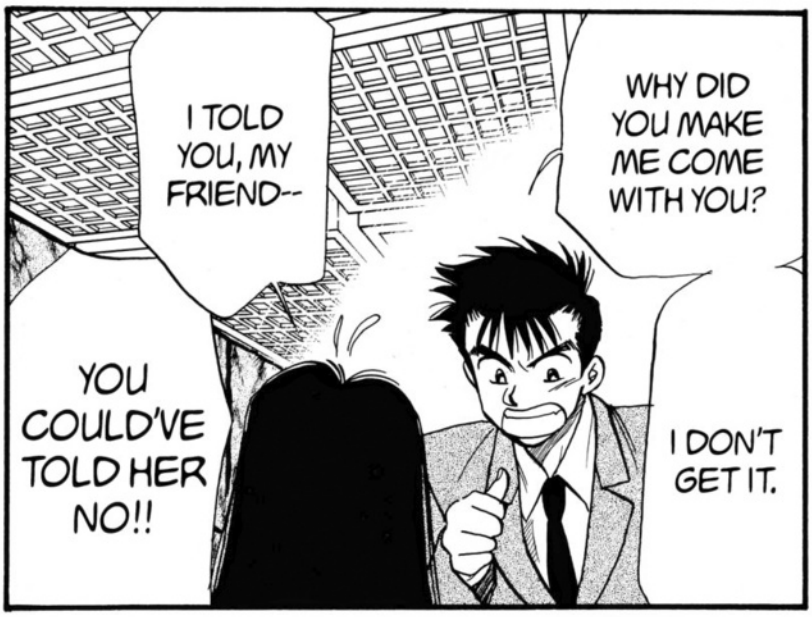


WUNN
FWUP FWUP
WUNN

TOMOKO, DO YOU HAVE FEELINGS FOR NIIMURA?
WHAT ?

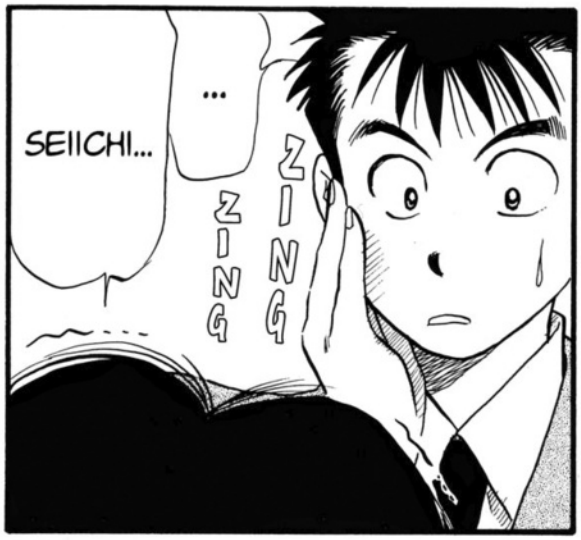

I WAS JUST WONDERING WHY YOU DIDN'T TELL NIIMURA THAT YOU WERE MARRIED.


WELL, HE DIDN'T ASK, AND THE SUBJECT NEVER CAME UP.
...

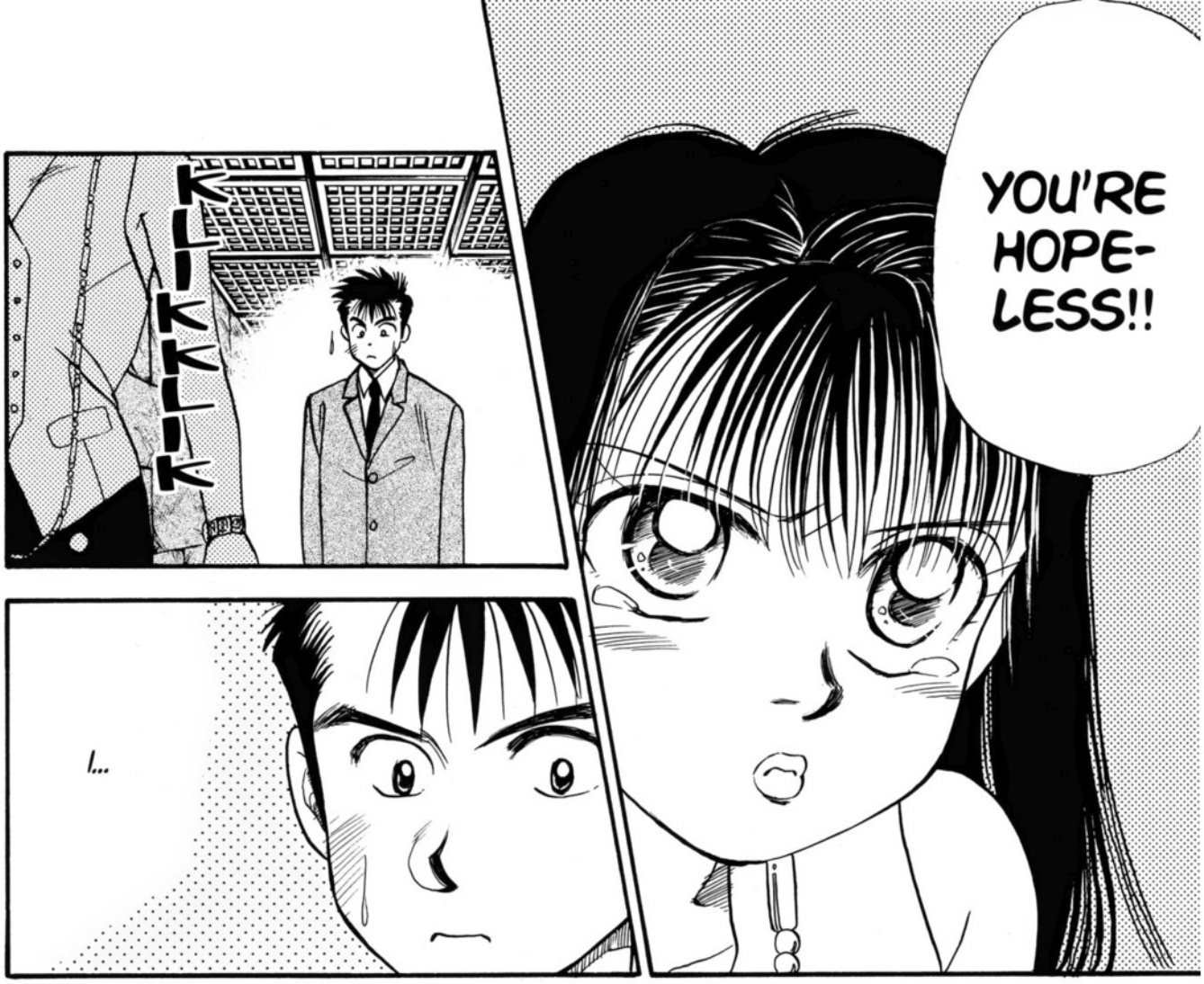

I TOLD YOU, MY FRIEND--
WHY DID YOU MAKE ME COME WITH YOU?
YOU COULD'VE TOLD HER NO!!
I DON'T GET IT.

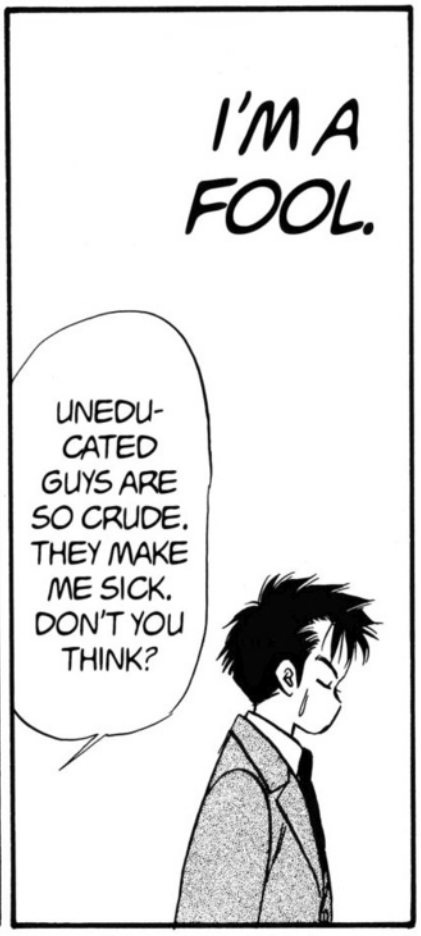
HE'S A FRIEND, AFTER ALL.
WELL, I DON'T DISLIKE HIM.

SW
AK


SEIICHI...
...
ZING
ZING

ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME JEALOUS?
OR ARE YOU HOPING TO BE MORE THAN JUST FRIENDS WITH NIIMURA? IT'S GOTTA BE ONE OR THE OTHER, RIGHT?!

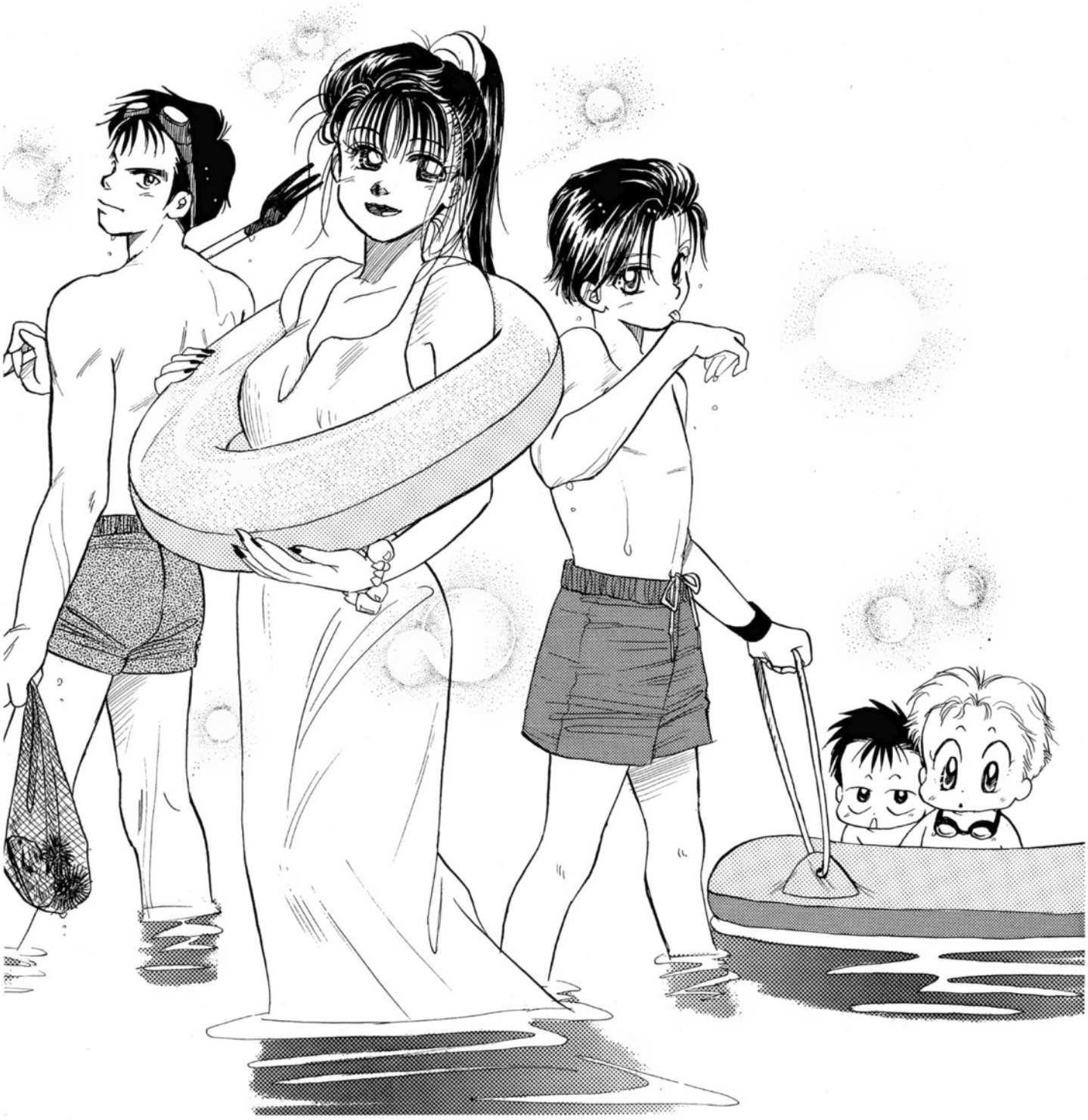


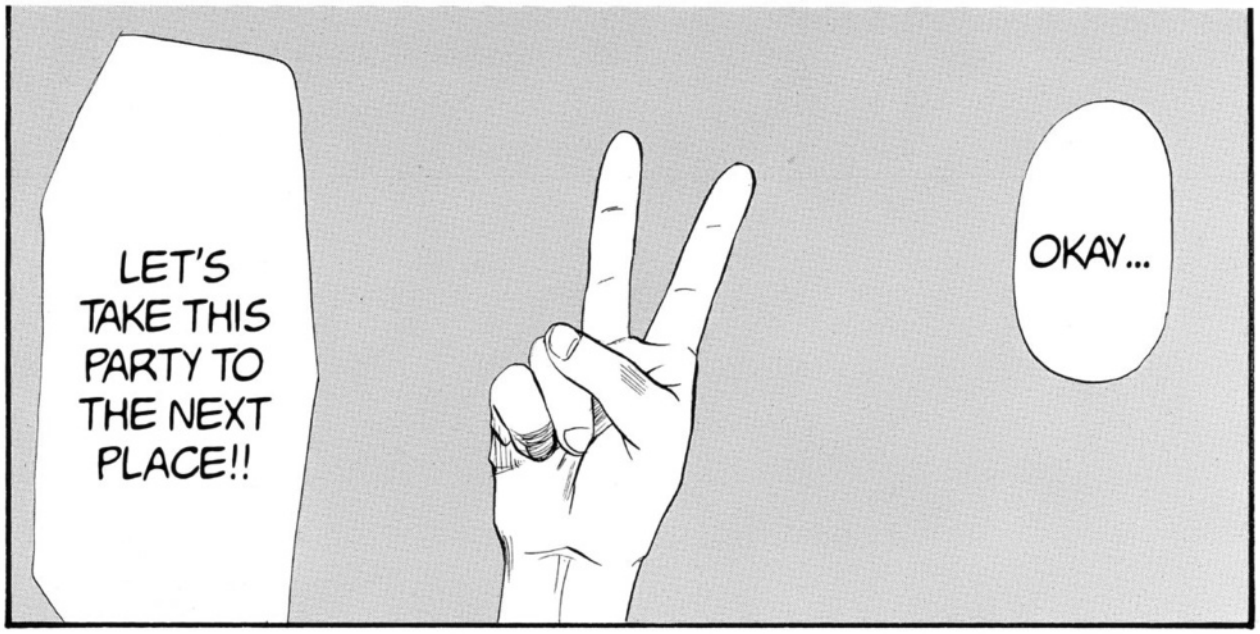


Chapter 53 / The End

BABY & Me

Chapter 54



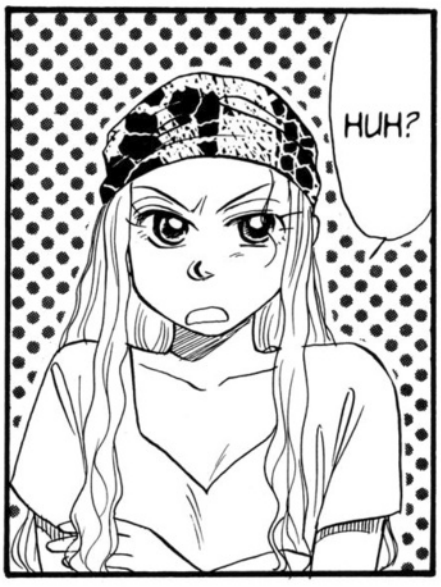

LET'S TAKE THIS PARTY TO THE NEXT PLACE!!
OKAY...

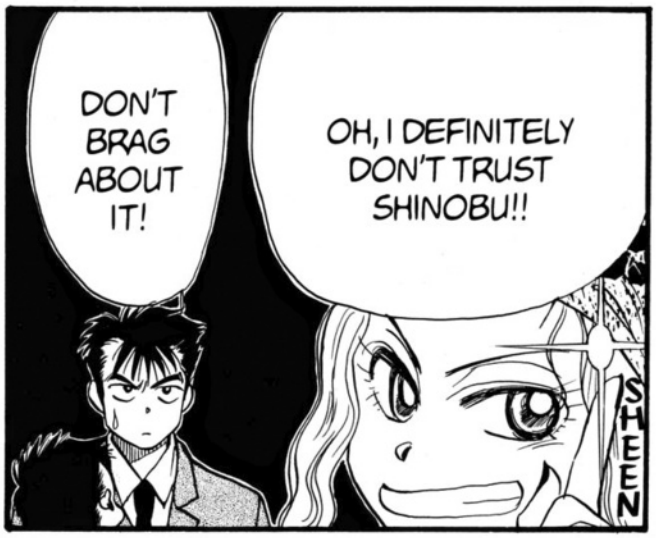
YEAH
...

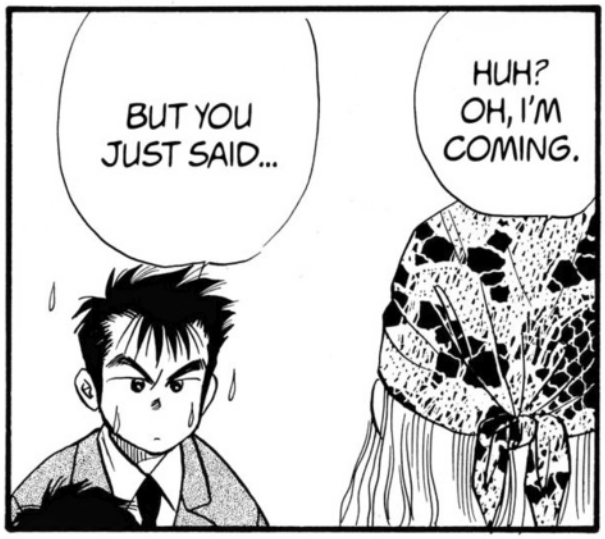
NATURALLY, MINORU WENT WITH US. (FOR SOME REASON.)
BWAZA, CAWWY ME.
MY'S FEETS IS TIRED.
...

WE WENT WITH TOMOKO TO HER CLASS REUNION. (FOR SOME REASON.)
I WONDER IF IT'LL END AFTER THE NEXT PLACE...
MINORU'S GOING TO GET SLEEPY AROUND 9:00.

DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE NOT COMING?
YOU MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO FOLLOW YOUR WIVES TO THE NEXT PARTY?
WHAT ?
Don't you trust them?

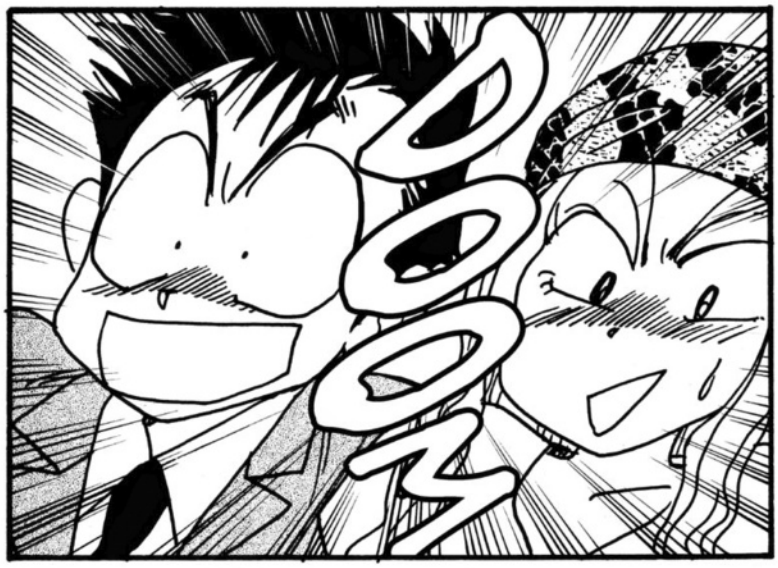

HUH?


DON'T BRAG ABOUT IT!
OH, I DEFINITELY DON'T TRUST SHINOBU!!
SHEEN


BUT YOU JUST SAID...
HUH? OH, I'M COMING.

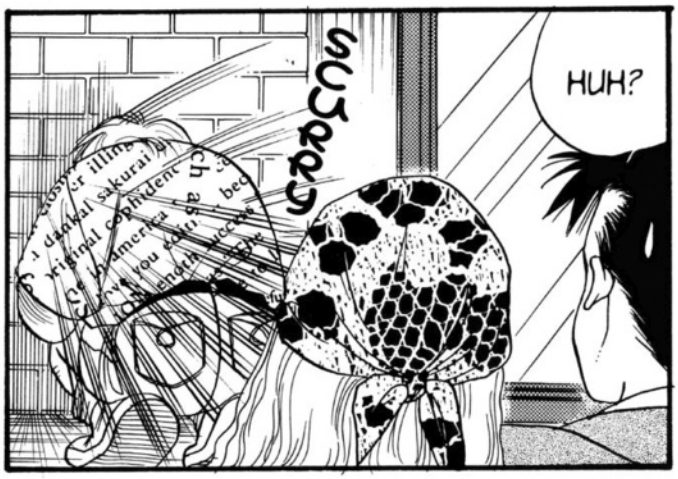
FINE, YOU STAY HERE.
CHAPPY, YOU'RE THE MOST JEALOUS OF US ALL.
WE SHOULD TRUST THE ONES WE LOVE!
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP

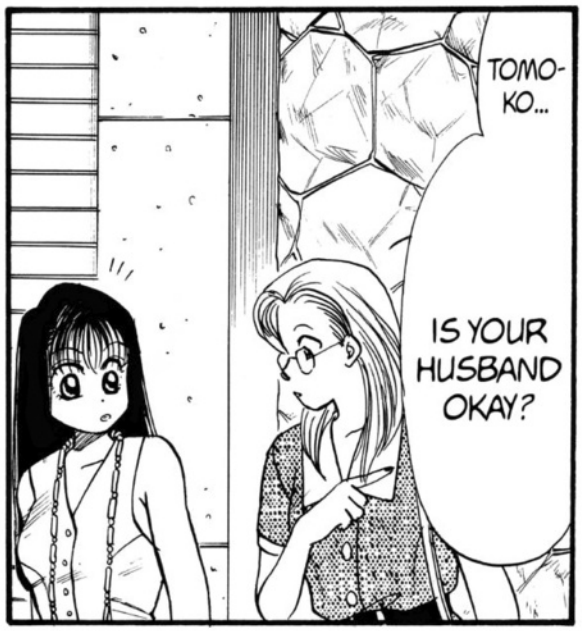
NO!
NO
NO
NO
SHIICHI
MARIKO


DOOOOM

GRRR

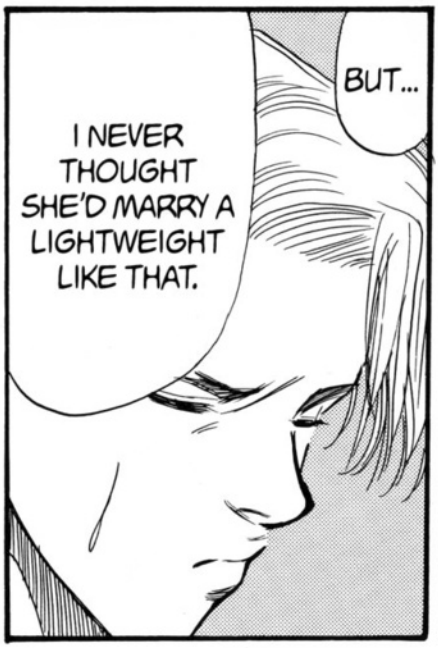
THEY SEEM TO BE EXCITED ABOUT SOMETHING.
WHY ARE YOU SO INTER-ESTED IN THEM?
YAP YAP YAP

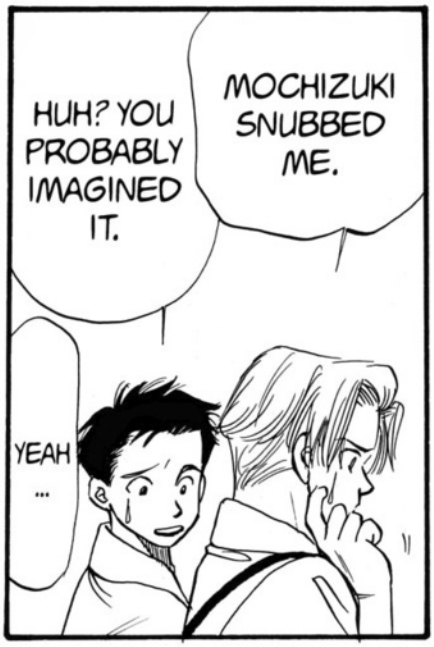

HUH?
SUSSRRY

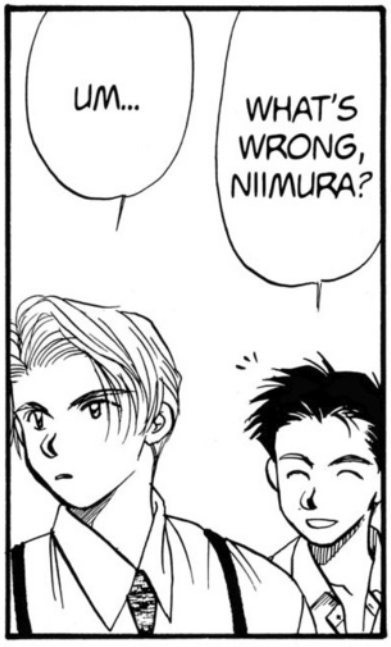

TOMO-KO...
IS YOUR HUSBAND OKAY?

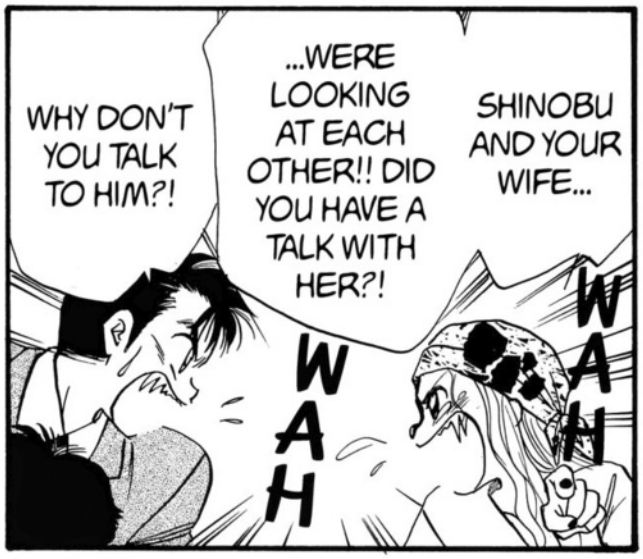
MOMMY, THEY'RE BEING MEAN TO ME...
SOB SOB SOB SOB

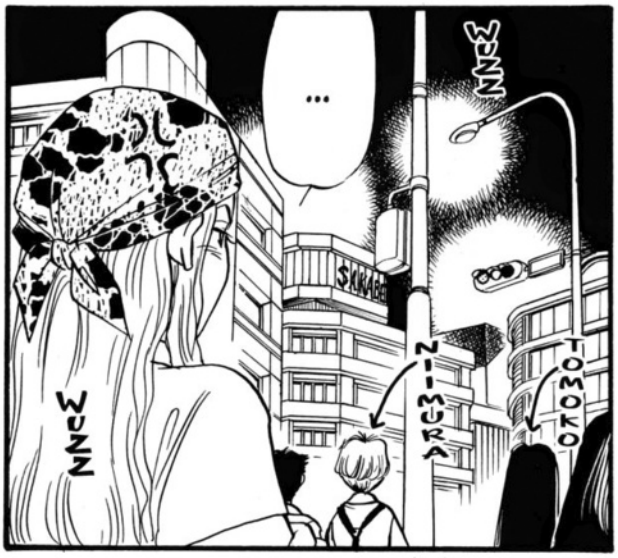
HE'S FINE. THE IDIOT.
WINN
WINN
?
ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME JEALOUS?
ARE YOU HOPING TO BE MORE THAN JUST FRIENDS WITH NIIMURA? IT'S GOTTA BE ONE OR THE OTHER, RIGHT?!
STUPID ...
MUTTER
GRRR
GRRR
GRRR
THAT WAS OUT OF LINE.
...
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL NIIMURA THAT YOU WERE MARRIED?
GLANCE
Wip
...!!
MAYBE ...
...I AM AT FAULT.











THE GROWN-UPS WERE STARTING TO BEHAVE LIKE CHILDREN.

Author's Note: Part 4

Hmm...

I like the paintings of the American artist Wyeth. They have great clarity, but they're heavy...no, they have a lot of depth. He has one called "Ghost." There's a man bathed in light, looking hazy, and he really does look like a ghost. I'd like to have one of his paintings, but I'm sure they cost millions of yen...or tens of millions. Oh... I want one! I want one! I want one for my treasure! Yeah...

My favorite illustrator is Peter Sato. I would always sigh when I look at his book of illustrations. I was stunned when I heard that he passed away last year. It can't be true. Someone please tell me it's a lie. And so Peter Sato's book of illustrations, Pastel Works, is now my treasure.

You know who Peter Sato is, don't you? One of his famous illustrations is the Mister Donut ad.

WHAT IS IT, TOMOKO?
TUP TUP TUP TUP
GLARE.
WHY DID I BOTHER TO WHISPER?

TAKUYA ...
COME HERE.
HAEH
HAEH

OH.
Especially when there's free booze.
WHEN SEIICHI DRINKS, HE DOESN'T KNOW WHEN TO STOP.

HUH?
HSP
HSP
LISTEN, IT'S ABOUT SEIICHI...

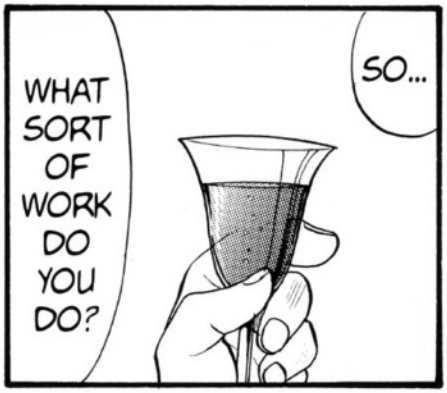
I THOUGHT THEY MADE UP. THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN ALREADY?
Sorry ...
Hmph...

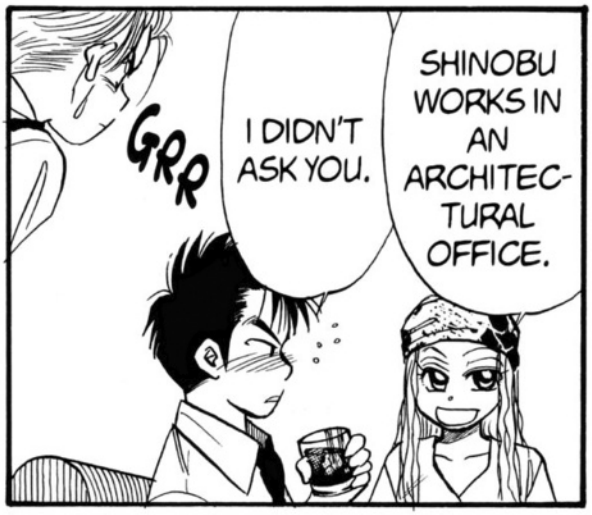
AGAIN ?!
THINGS AREN'T SO GOOD BETWEEN SEIICHI AND ME RIGHT NOW.
HEE HEE HEE

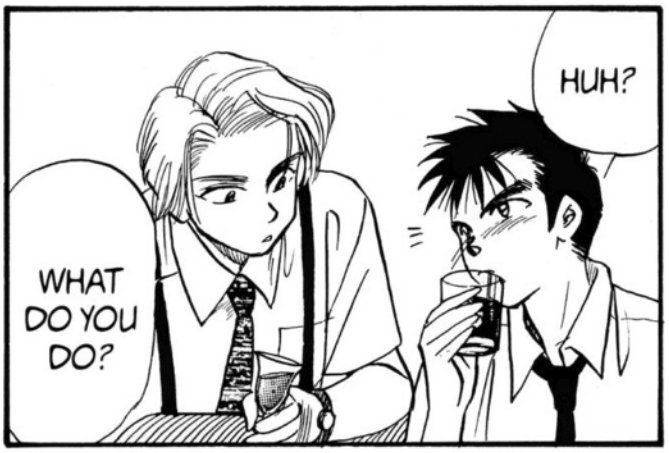
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TALK TO HIM.
I HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM SO THAT HE DOESN'T GO OVERBOARD.

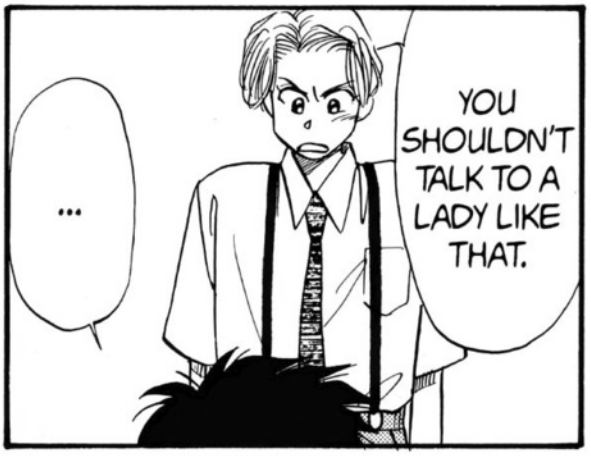
TOO LATE.
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
TOMOKO ...
IDE3
IDE3

!!
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
HE DRANK THE WHOLE BOTTLE.
WHOA! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS GUY.


WHAT SORT OF WORK DO YOU DO?
SO...


GRR
I DIDN'T ASK YOU.
SHINOBU WORKS IN AN ARCHITEC-TURAL OFFICE.


WHAT DO YOU DO?
HUH?

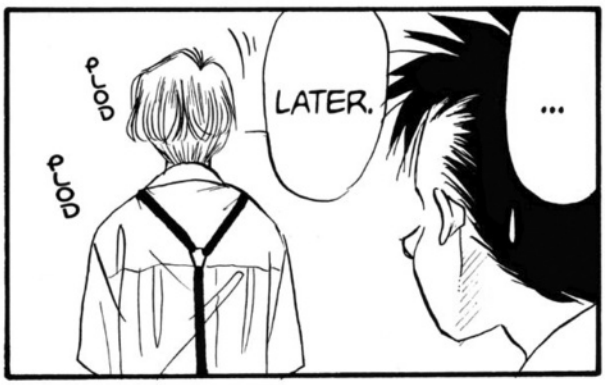

...
YOU SHOULDN'T TALK TO A LADY LIKE THAT.

HUH? ME?
WHAT ABOUT YOU, NIIMURA?

GRR
A LADY?
YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY I TALK TO YOUR WOMAN?
THEN HOW COME YOU'RE THROWING YOURSELF AT TOMOKO?
WHAT?
ARE YOU REALLY FIGHTING OVER ME?
THAT'S RIGHT.
NO WE'RE NOT!
I... I...
You don't have to deny it so strongly.
I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED MOCHIZUKI.
MUMBLE
SHE BROKE UP WITH ME IN HIGH SCHOOL, BUT...
MUMBLE
...WHEN I SAW HER AGAIN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, SHE HADN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
MUMBLE
AND THEN... WELL...
MUMBLE

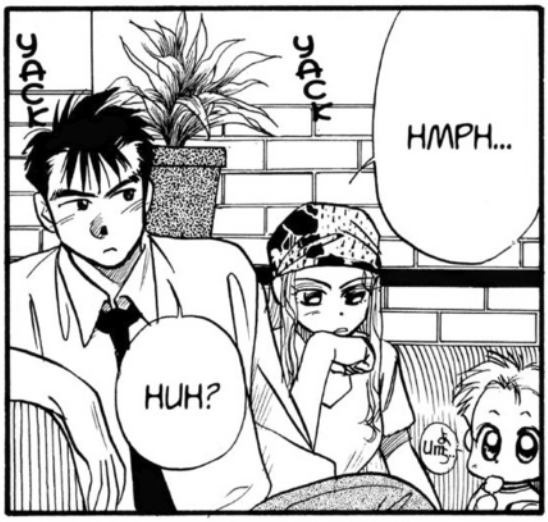
...
SIGH
WHAT AM I TALKING ABOUT?
I'M A MESS.

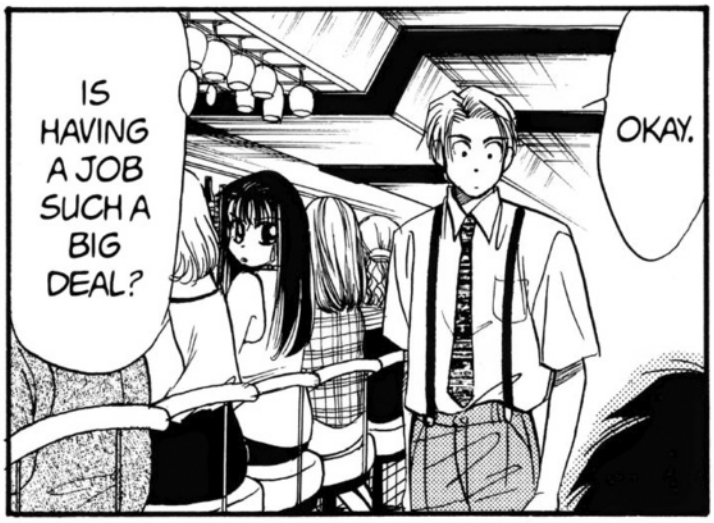
...I FELT A SUDDEN LONGING FOR OUR SCHOOL DAYS.

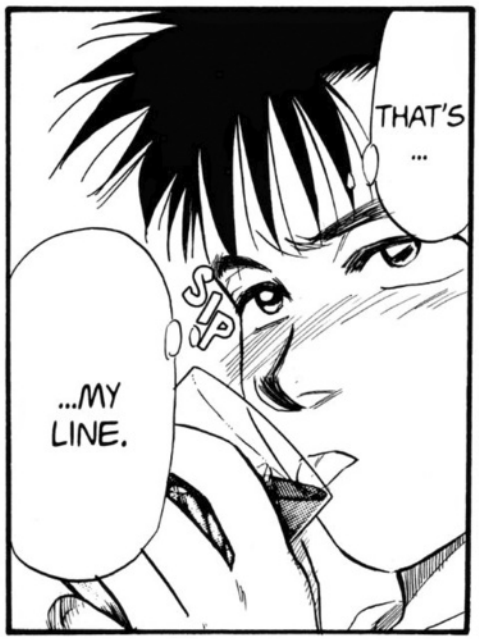

...
LATER.
PLOD
PLOD

I'M A COOK.
I HAVE A REAL JOB.

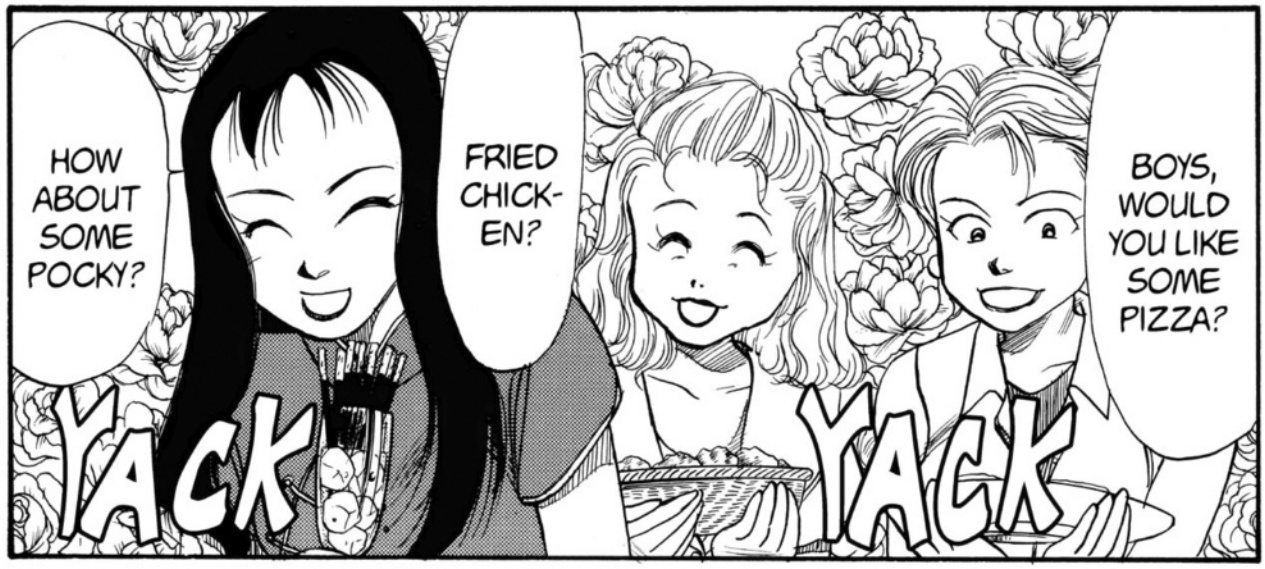
LISTEN, NIIMURA...
HUH?


HMPH...
YACK
YACK
HUH?
um

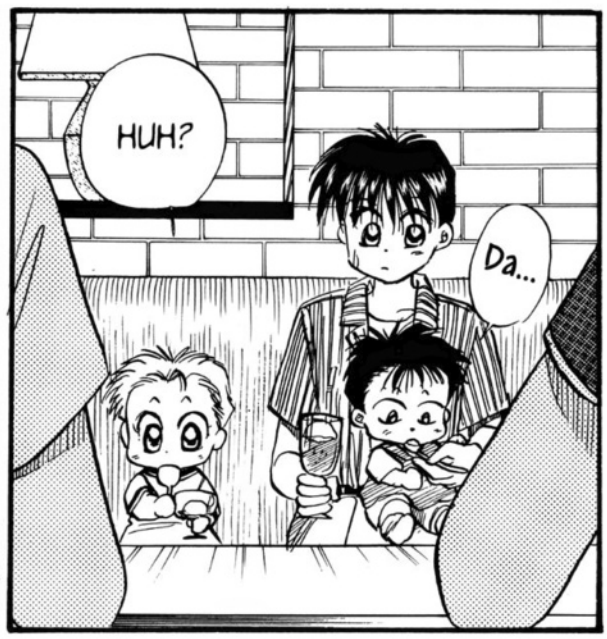

OKAY.
IS HAVING A JOB SUCH A BIG DEAL?

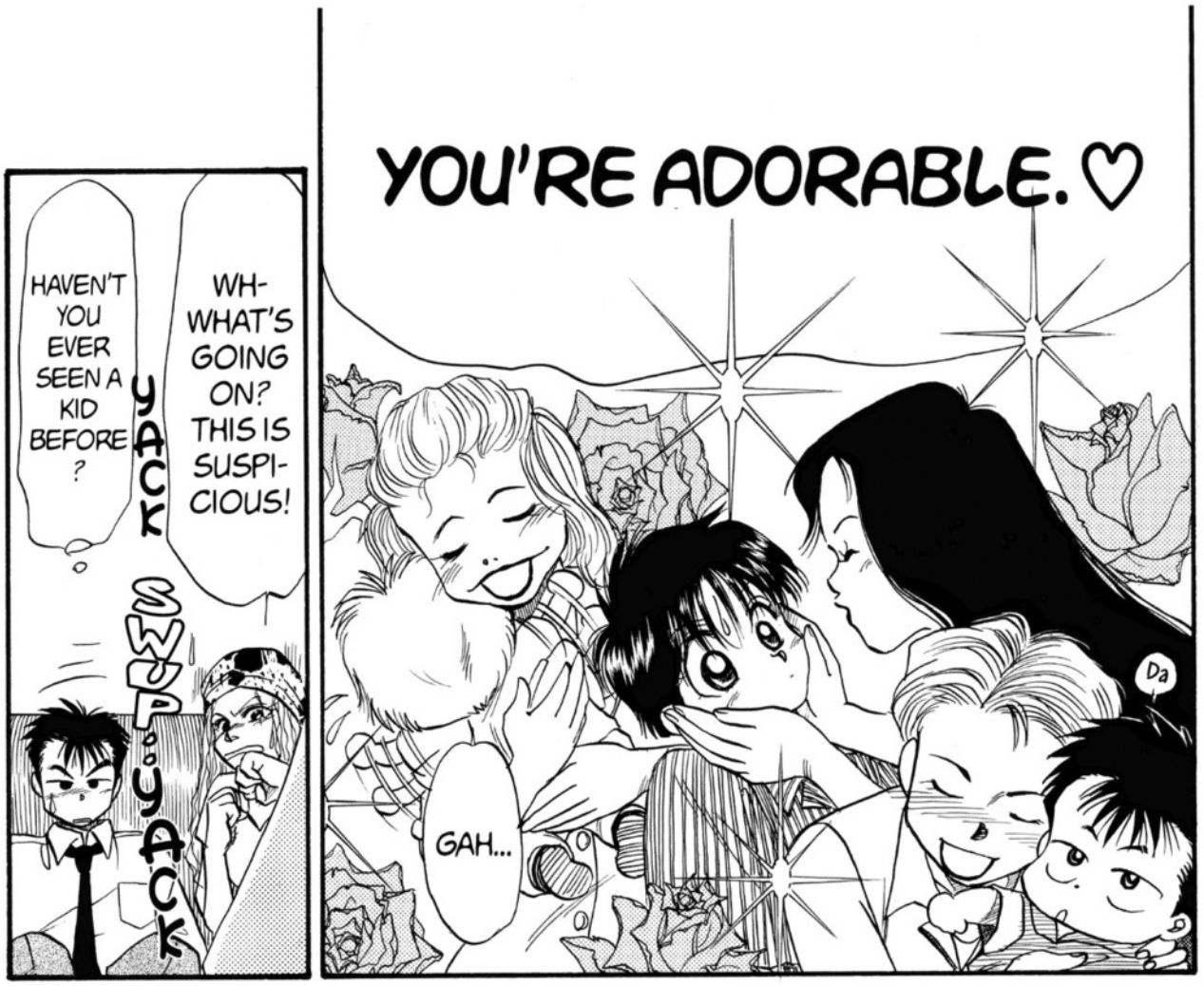

THAT'S ...
SIP
...MY LINE.

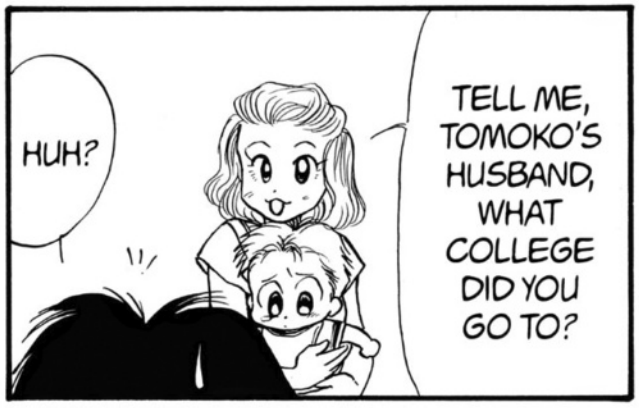
AFTER HEARING SHINOBU SAY THAT...
...HOW CAN I NOT BE DE-PRESSED ?

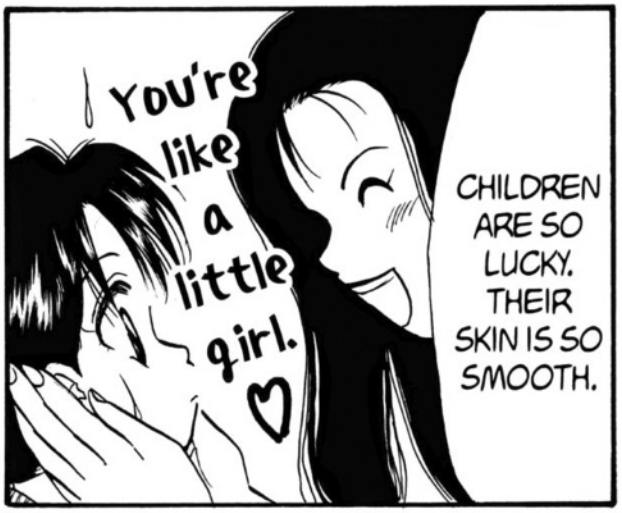

HOW ABOUT SOME POCKY?
FRIED CHICK-EN?
BOYS, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME PIZZA?
YACK
YACK

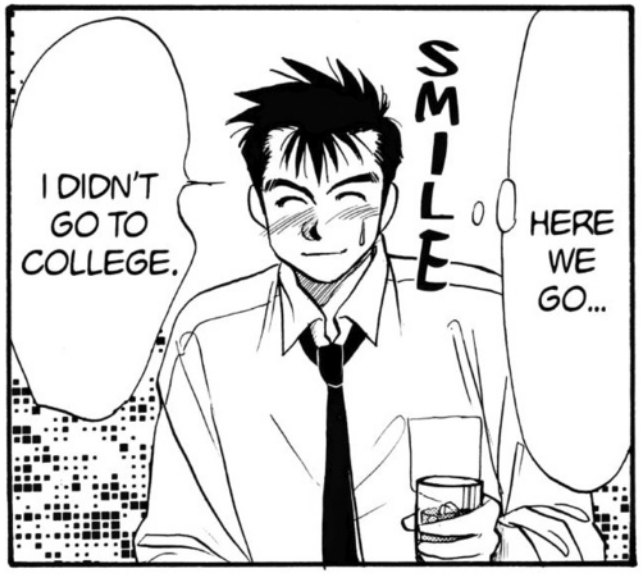
CAN I SIT NEXT TO YOU?
WHAT A SWEET BABY.
SWIP

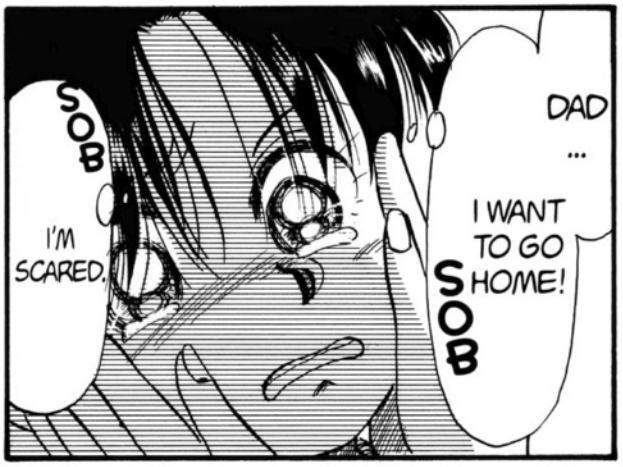

HUH?
Da...


YOU'RE ADORABLE.♡
GAH...
Da
WH-WHAT'S GOING ON? THIS IS SUSPICIOUS!
HAVEN'T YOU EVER SEEN A KID BEFORE?
YACK
SWIP.
YACK

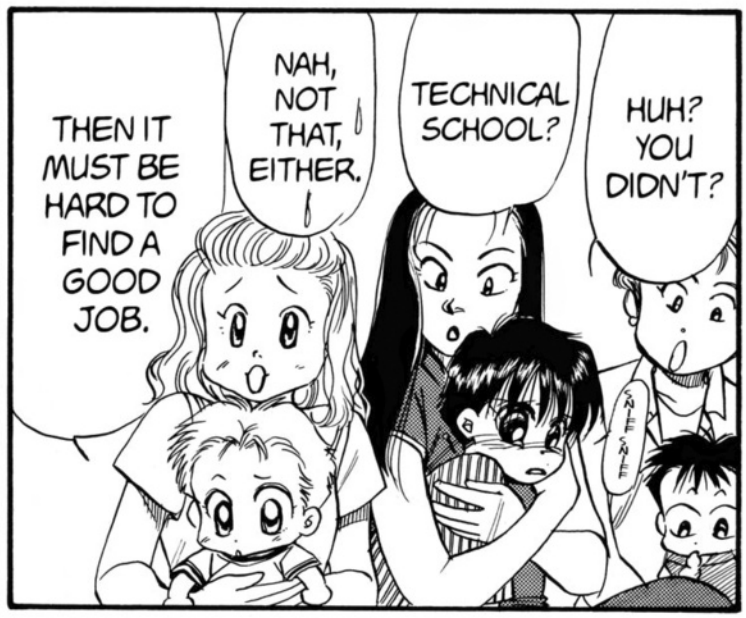

TELL ME, TOMOKO'S HUSBAND, WHAT COLLEGE DID YOU GO TO?
HUH?

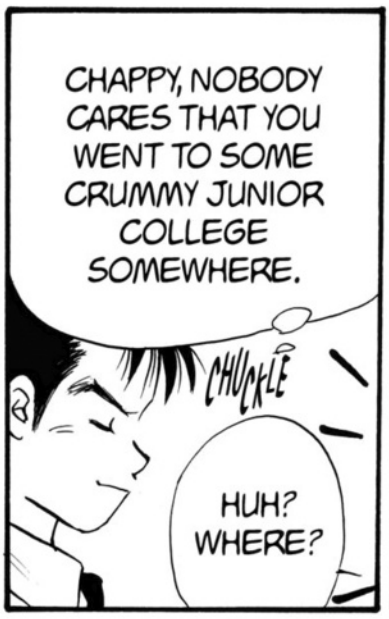

CHILDREN ARE SO LUCKY. THEIR SKIN IS SO SMOOTH.
You're like a little girl. ♡


HERE WE GO...
SMILE
I DIDN'T GO TO COLLEGE.


DAD ...
I WANT TO GO HOME!
SOB
SOB
I'M SCARED.

...
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSI-NESS!!

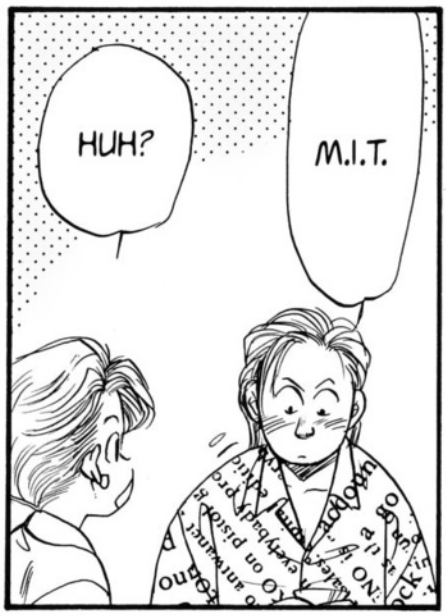

THEN IT MUST BE HARD TO FIND A GOOD JOB.
NAH, NOT THAT, EITHER.
TECHNICAL SCHOOL?
HUH? YOU DIDN'T?

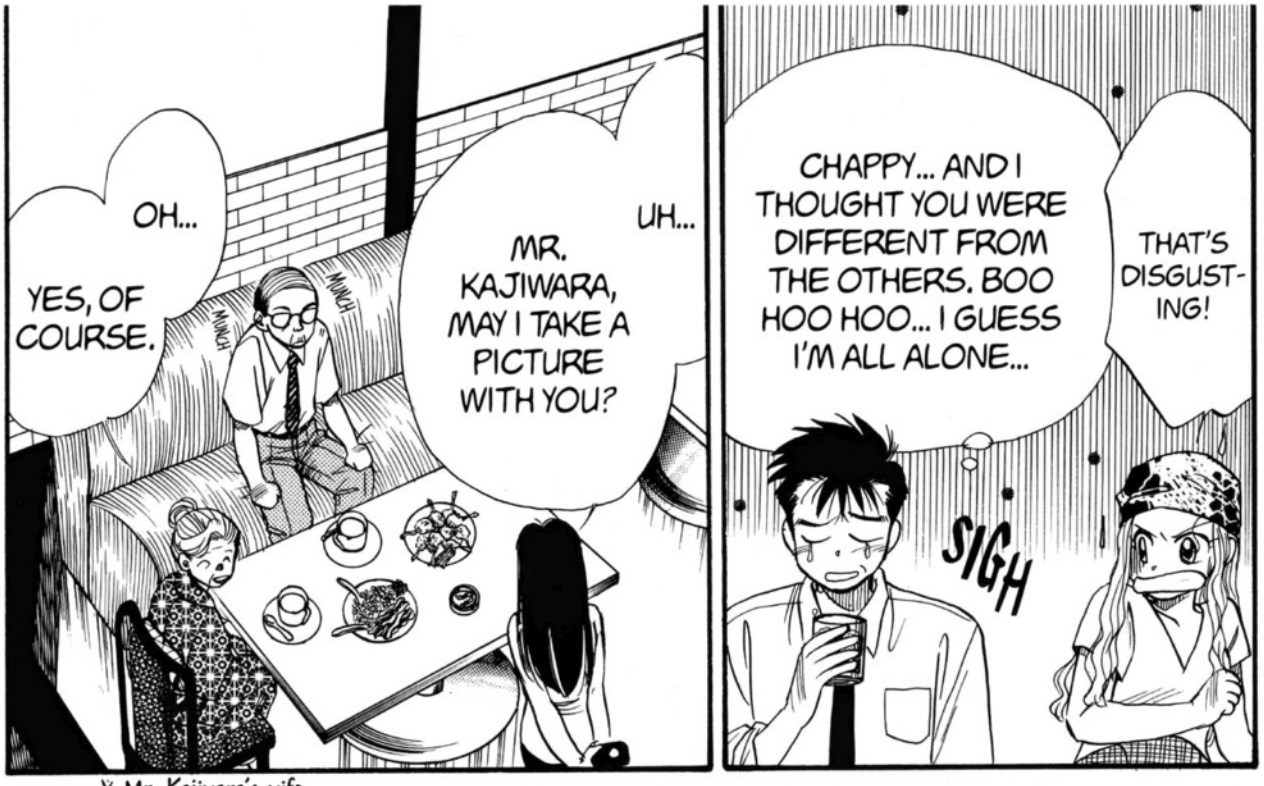

CHAPPY, NOBODY CARES THAT YOU WENT TO SOME CRUMMY JUNIOR COLLEGE SOMEWHERE.
CHUCKLE
HUH? WHERE?

YEAH, I WENT TO SCHOOL.
WELL ...

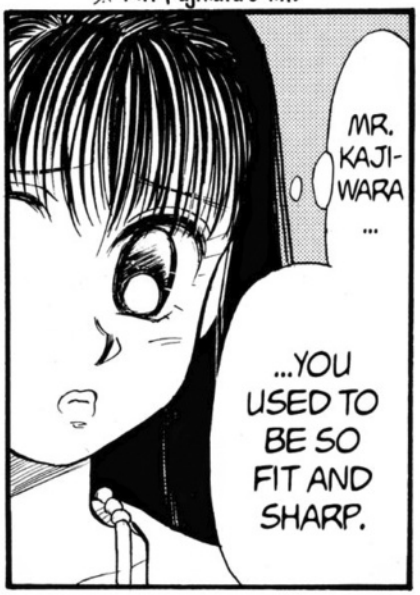
WIP
WHAT ABOUT NATSUKO'S HUSBAND?
HUH?

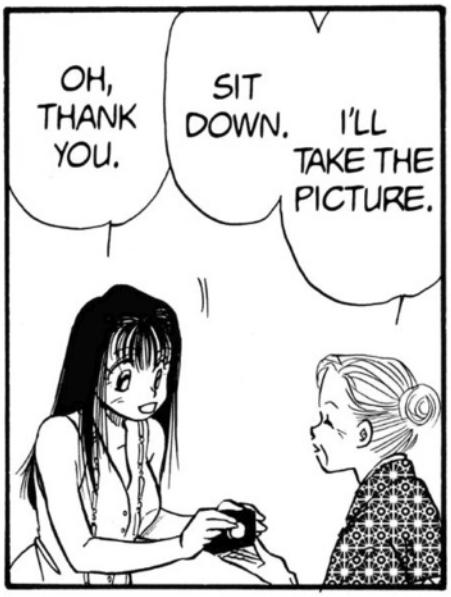
PLOOF
WOW! THAT'S A FAMOUS SCHOOL!!
WHAT?!
THE MASSA-CHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOL-OGY.

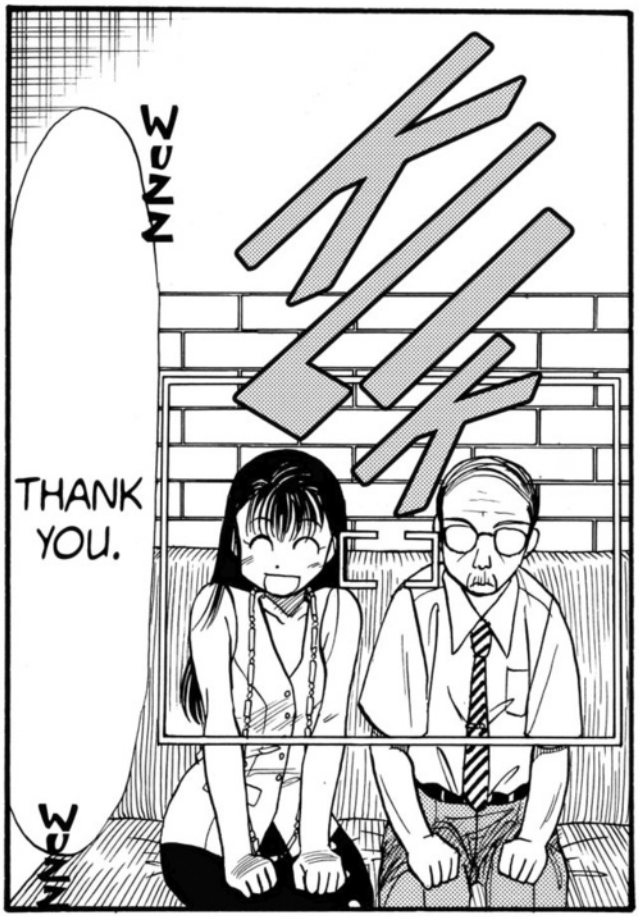

HUH?
M.I.T.



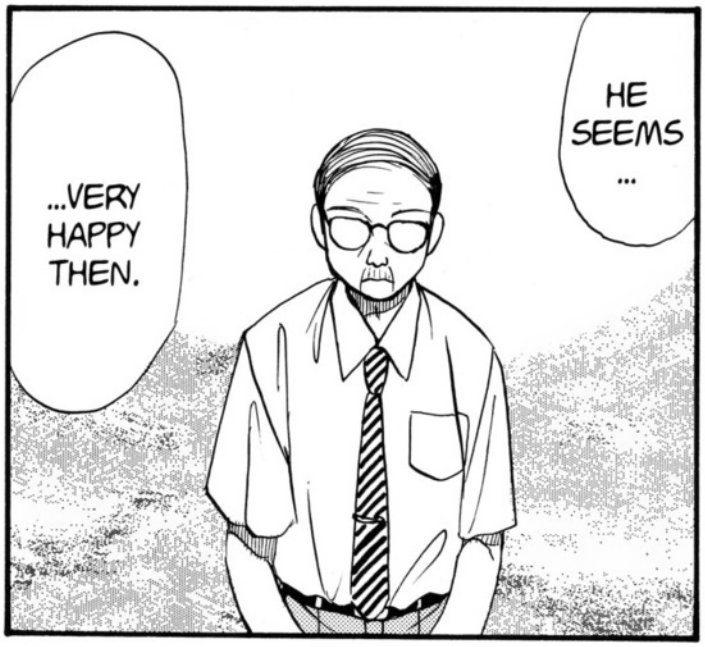
※ Mr. Kajiwara's wife

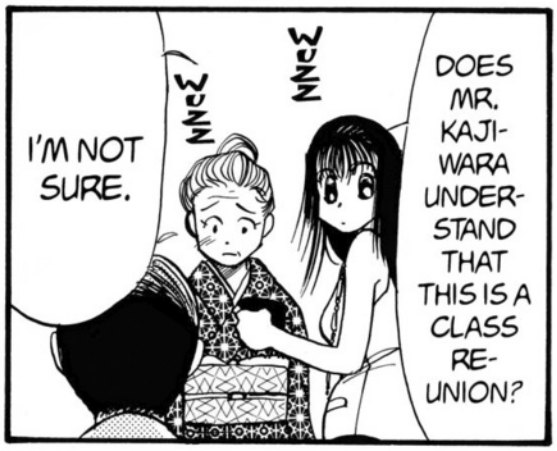


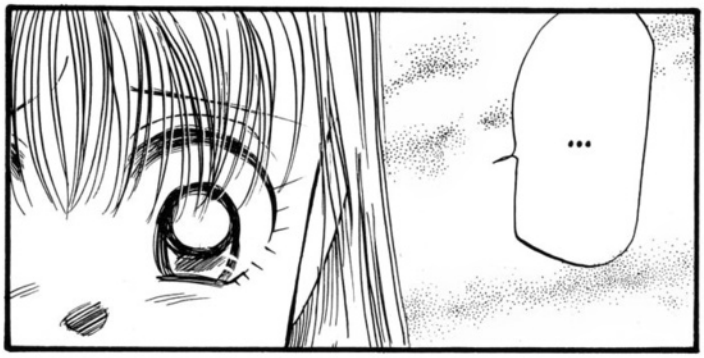



WUNN
THANK YOU.
WUNN

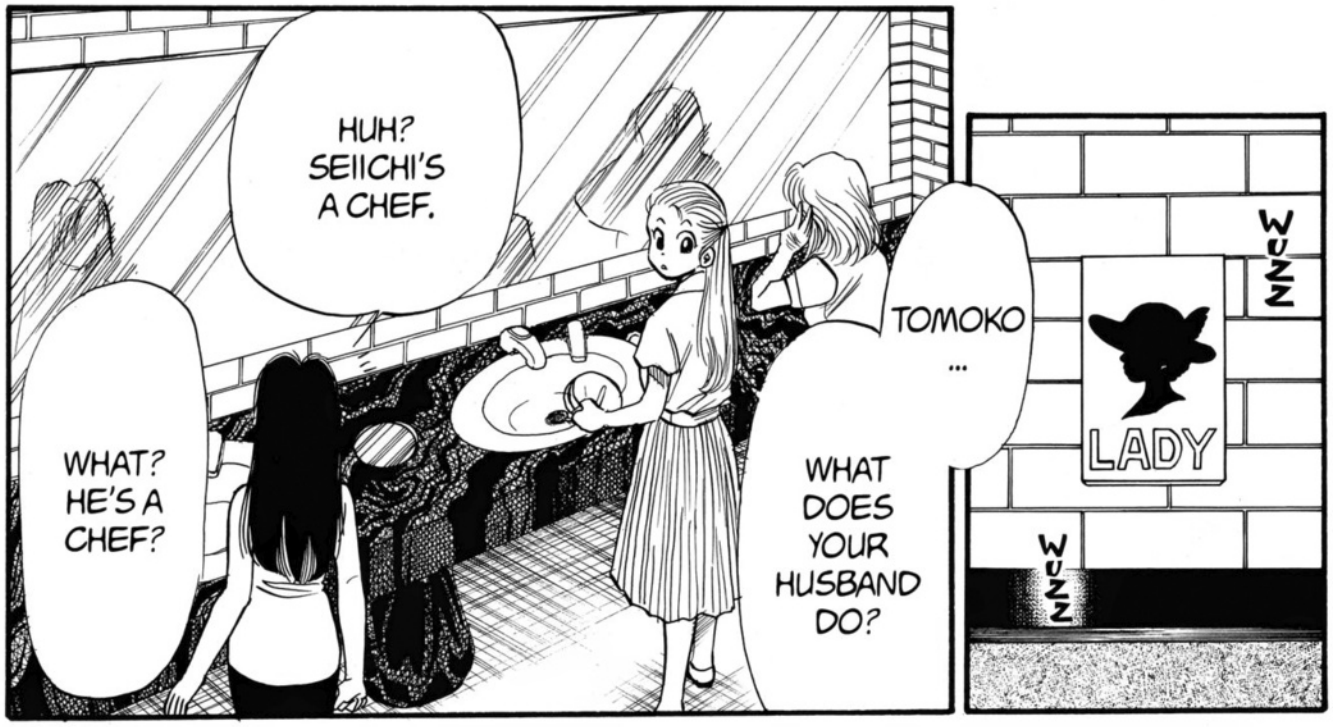
...SUCH A WASTE.
...SUCH A WASTE.
MUNCH
MUNCH
IT REALLY IS...
...SUCH A WASTE.

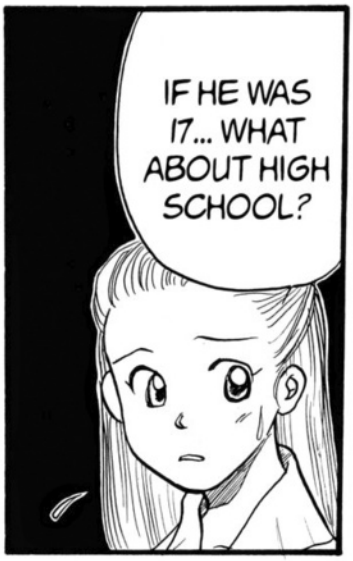

HE SEEMS ...
...VERY HAPPY THEN.

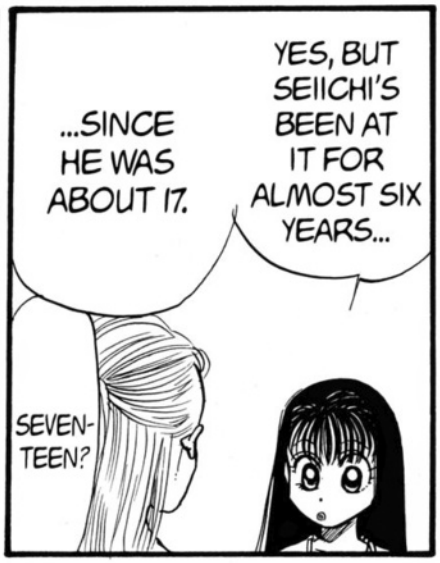

DOES MR. KAJI-WARA UNDER-STAND THAT THIS IS A CLASS RE-UNION?
WUNN
WUNN
I'M NOT SURE.

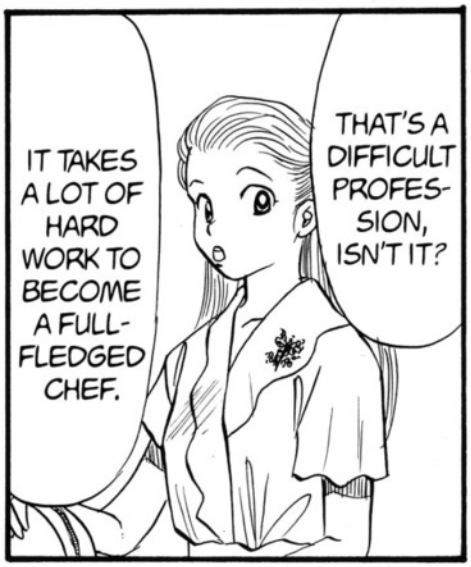

...

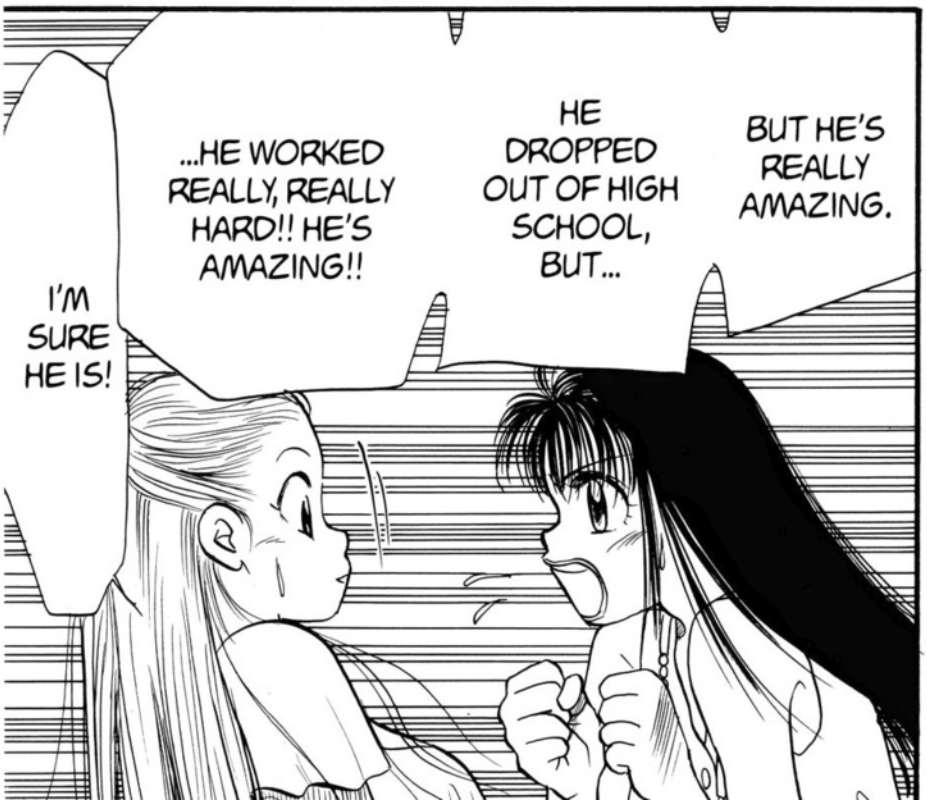
SOMETIMES OUT OF THE BLUE...
...HE'LL START TALKING ABOUT HIS STUDENTS.


HUH? SEIICHI'S A CHEF.
WHAT? HE'S A CHEF?
TOMOKO ...
WHAT DOES YOUR HUSBAND DO?
WUZZ
LADY
WUZZ


IF HE WAS 17... WHAT ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL?


...SINCE HE WAS ABOUT 17.
YES, BUT SEIICHI'S BEEN AT IT FOR ALMOST SIX YEARS...
SEVEN-TEEN?


IT TAKES A LOT OF HARD WORK TO BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED CHEF.
THAT'S A DIFFICULT PROFES-SION, ISN'T IT?


...HE WORKED REALLY, REALLY HARD!! HE'S AMAZING!!
HE DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, BUT...
BUT HE'S REALLY AMAZING.
I'M SURE HE IS!

HUH ?
...

UH, SEIICHI ...
...HAVEN'T YOU HAD ENOUGH TO DRINK?

...
GLUG
GLUG

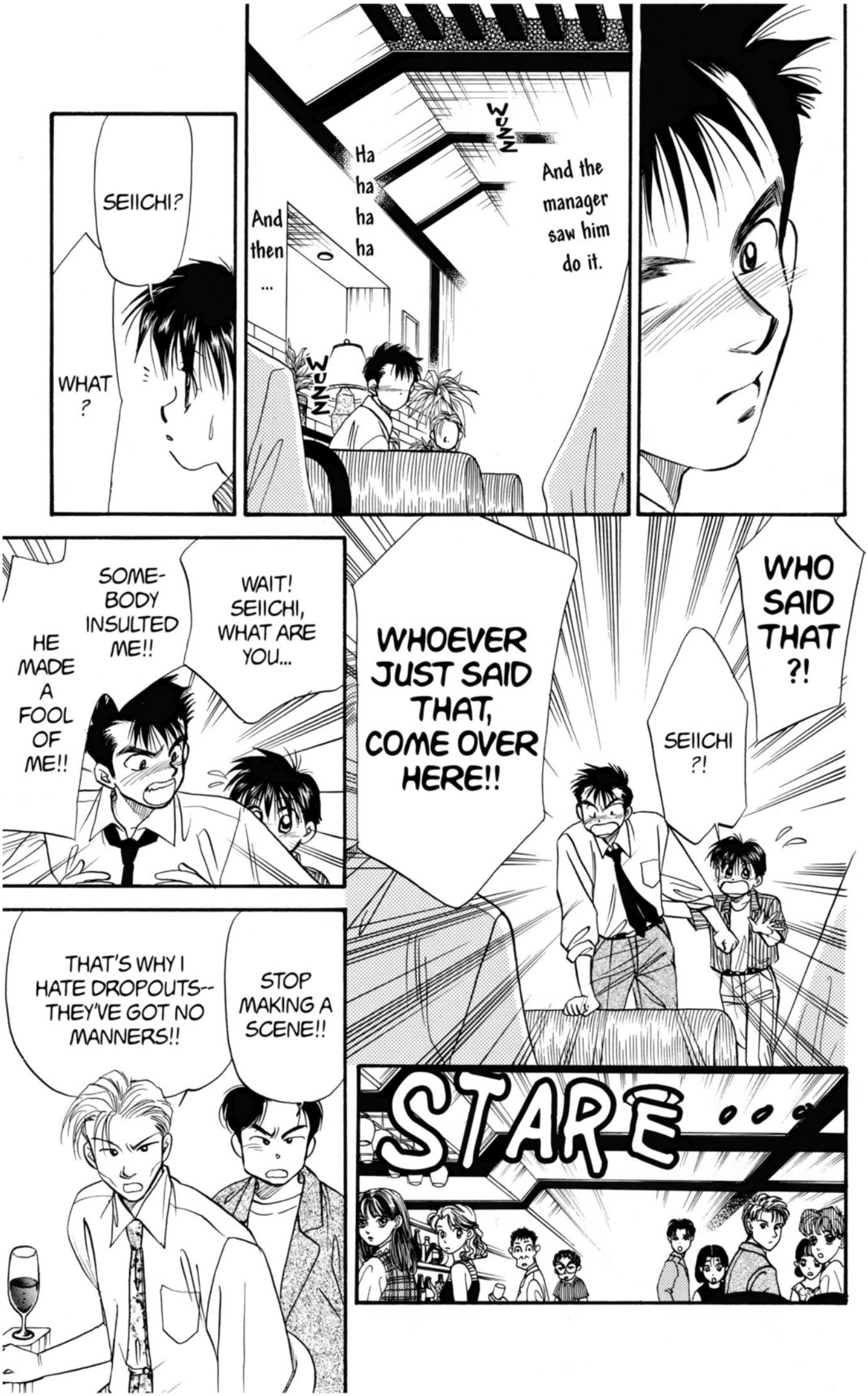
SLURP

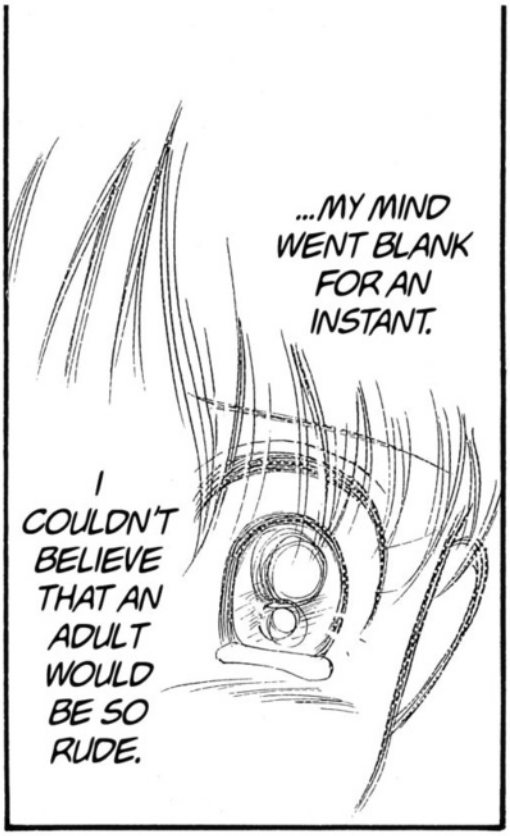
SHUD-DUP.
STOP TELLIN' ME WHAT TO DO.

...

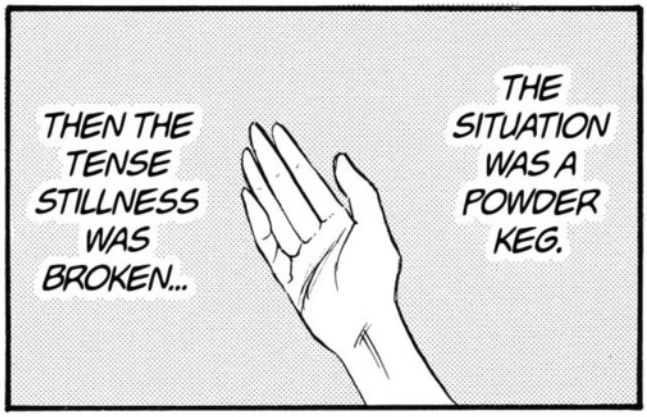
HE DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL? WELL, HE LOOKS LIKE A LOSER.
WSP
WSP

No one can shtop me now.
HIC
Scawy ...
Good-ness!


SEIICHI?
WHAT ?
And then ...
Ha ha ha ha
WUNN
WUNN
And the manager saw him do it.
WHO SAID THAT ?!
SEIICHI ?!
WHOEVER JUST SAID THAT, COME OVER HERE!!
WAIT! SEIICHI, WHAT ARE YOU...
SOME-BODY INSULTED ME!!
HE MADE A FOOL OF ME!!
STOP MAKING A SCENE!!
THAT'S WHY I HATE DROPOUTS-- THEY'VE GOT NO MANNERS!!
STARE


...MY MIND WENT BLANK FOR AN INSTANT.
I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT AN ADULT WOULD BE SO RUDE.

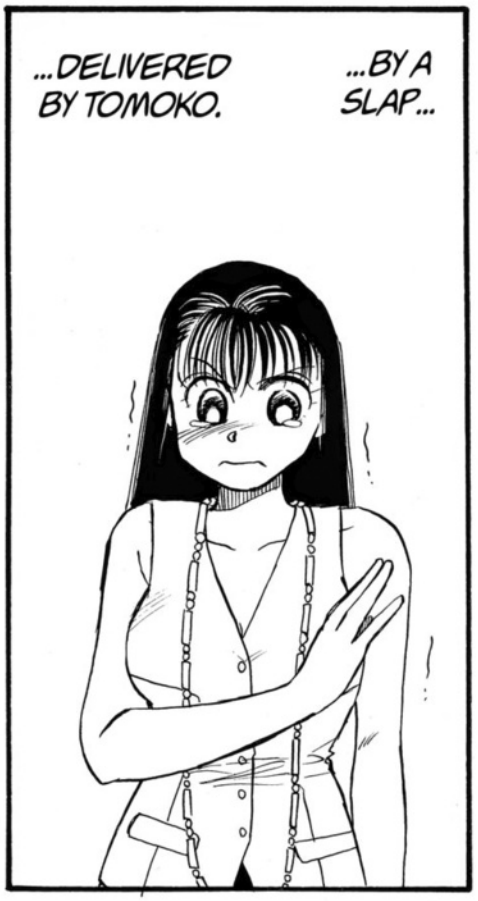
AT THAT MOMENT ...


THEN THE TENSE STILLNESS WAS BROKEN...
THE SITUATION WAS A POWDER KEG.

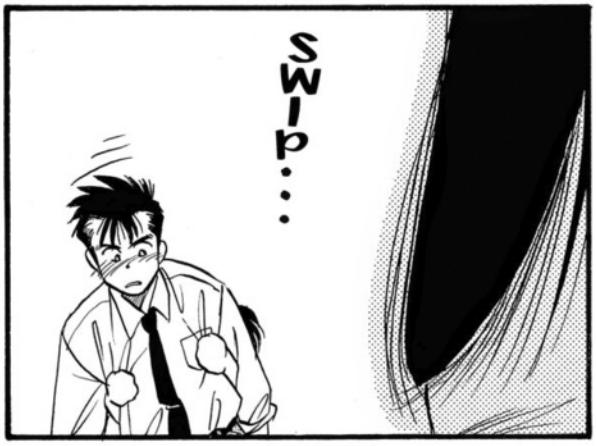
SW
AK

SEIICHI SEEMED TO FREEZE ...
...AND I FELT SAD FOR HIM.

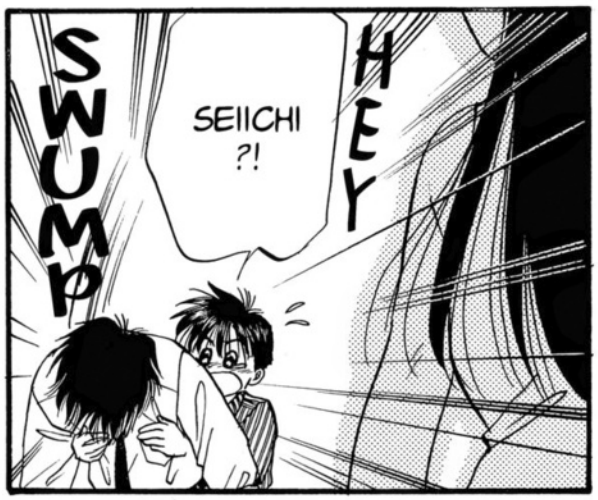
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT SEIICHI!
DON'T YOU DARE INSULT HIM!!

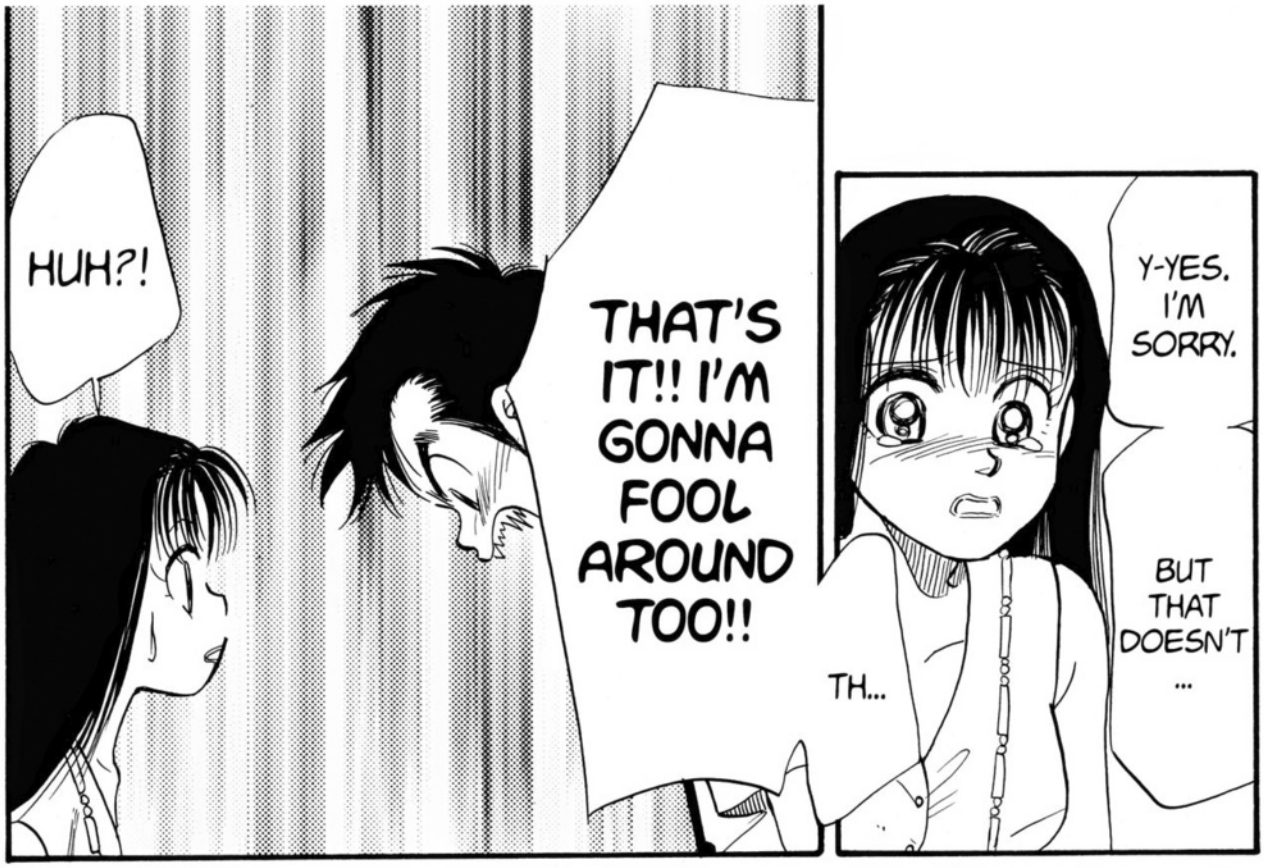

...DELIVERED BY TOMOKO.
...BY A SLAP...

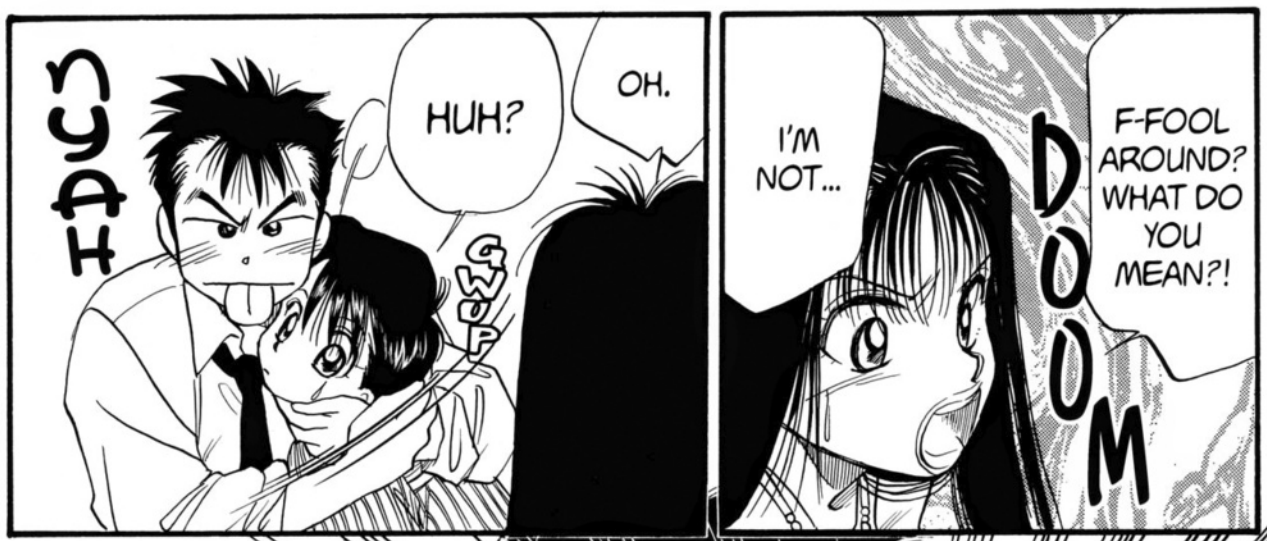
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?!
SEI-ICHI?!

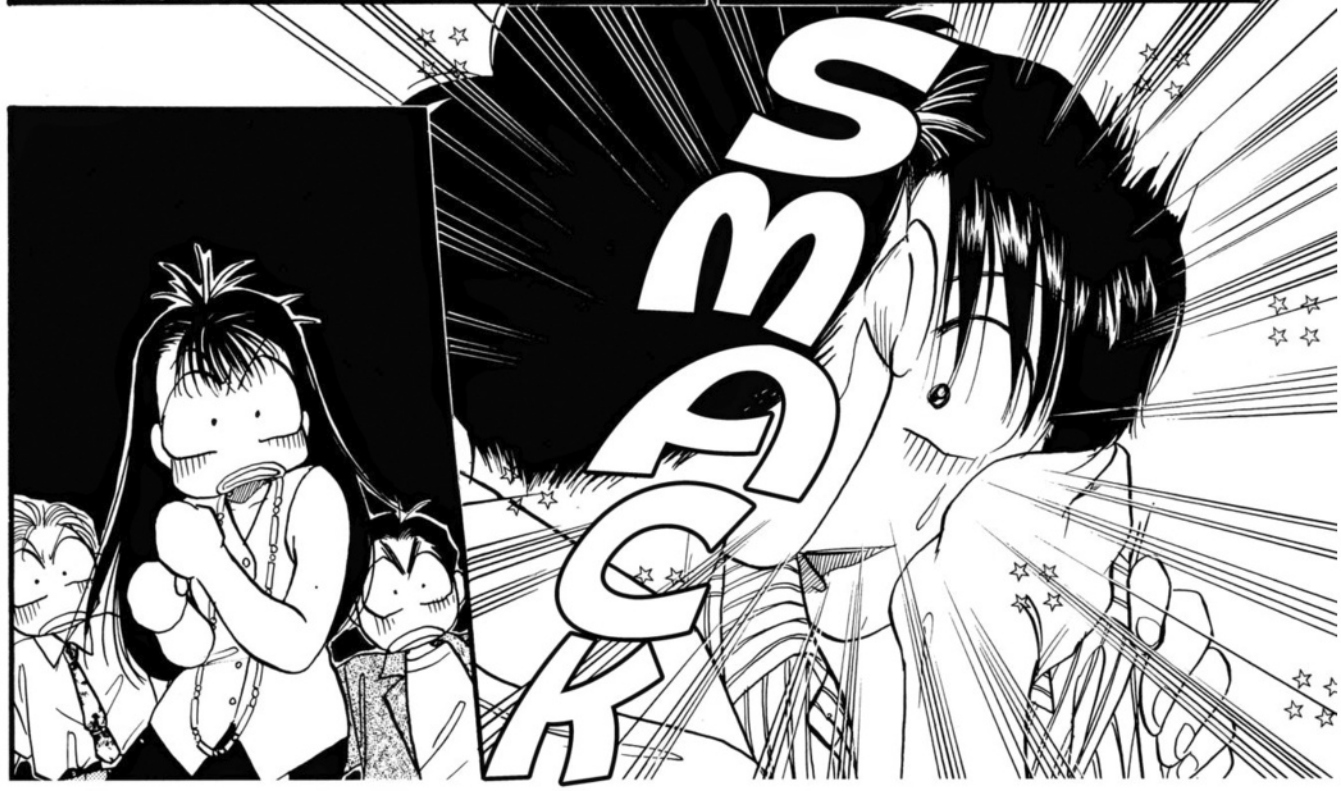

SWIP...

...DID YOU TELL THEM...
...THAT I ONLY FINISHED MIDDLE SCHOOL?
BY ANY CHANCE ...


HEY
SEIICHI ?!
SWUMP


HUH?!
THAT'S IT!! I'M GONNA FOOL AROUND TOO!!
Y-YES. I'M SORRY.
BUT THAT DOESN'T ...
TH...


HUH?
OH.
GWUP
I'M NOT...
F-FOOL AROUND? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
DOOM


SMACK

WHO'D BE JEALOUS OF THAT, YOU STUPID DRUNK ?!

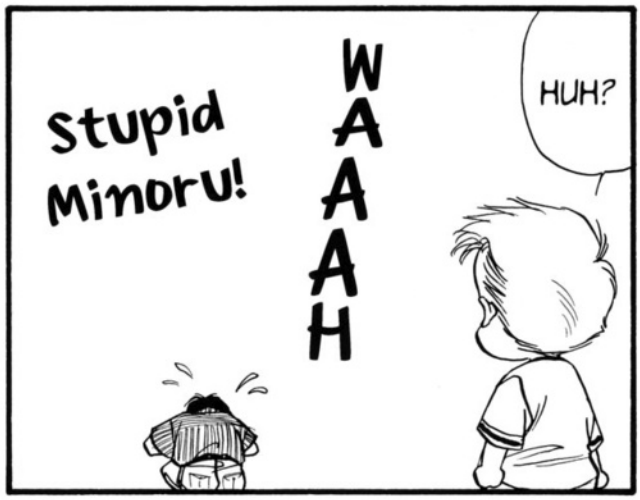
HOW'S THAT? BET YOU'RE JEALOUS NOW, HUH, TOMOKO?
PLUP
PLUP

FWAP
FWAP

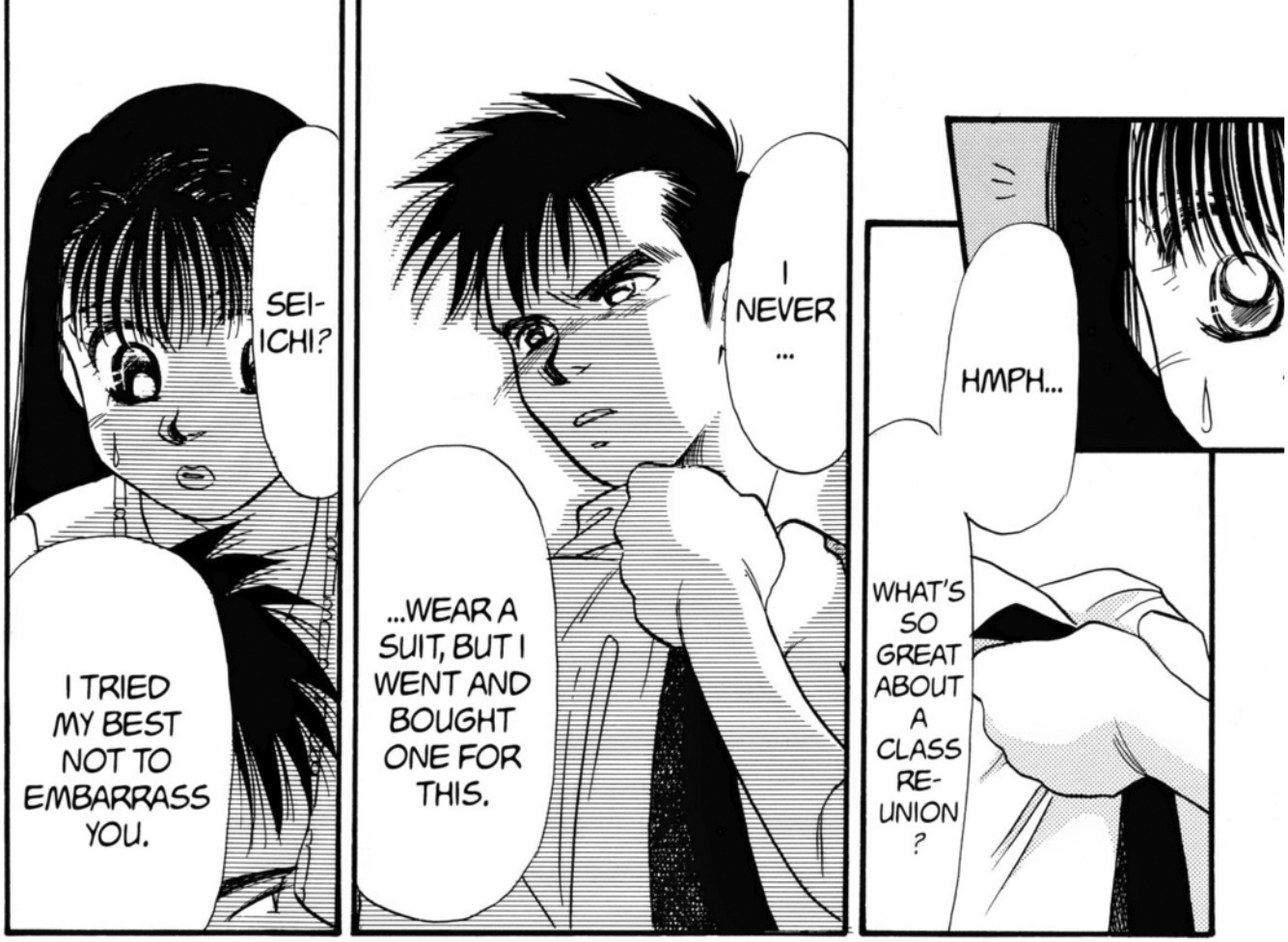
KISH...
ME TOO...

M-MY FIRST KISS...
SNIFF
SNIFF
YAP
YAP

HUH?
BWAZA ...
SNIFF

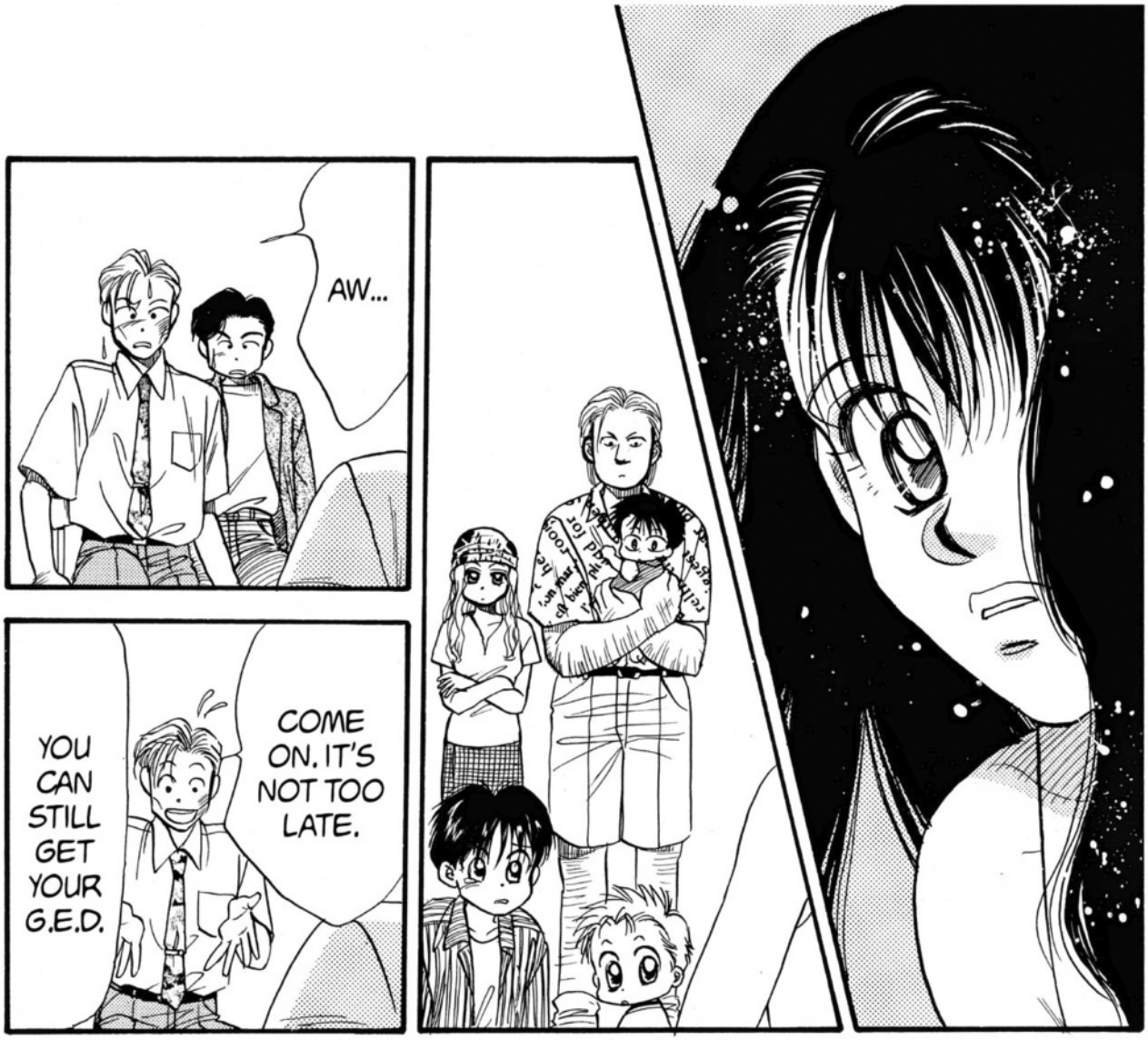

HUH?
WAAAH
Stupid Minoru!

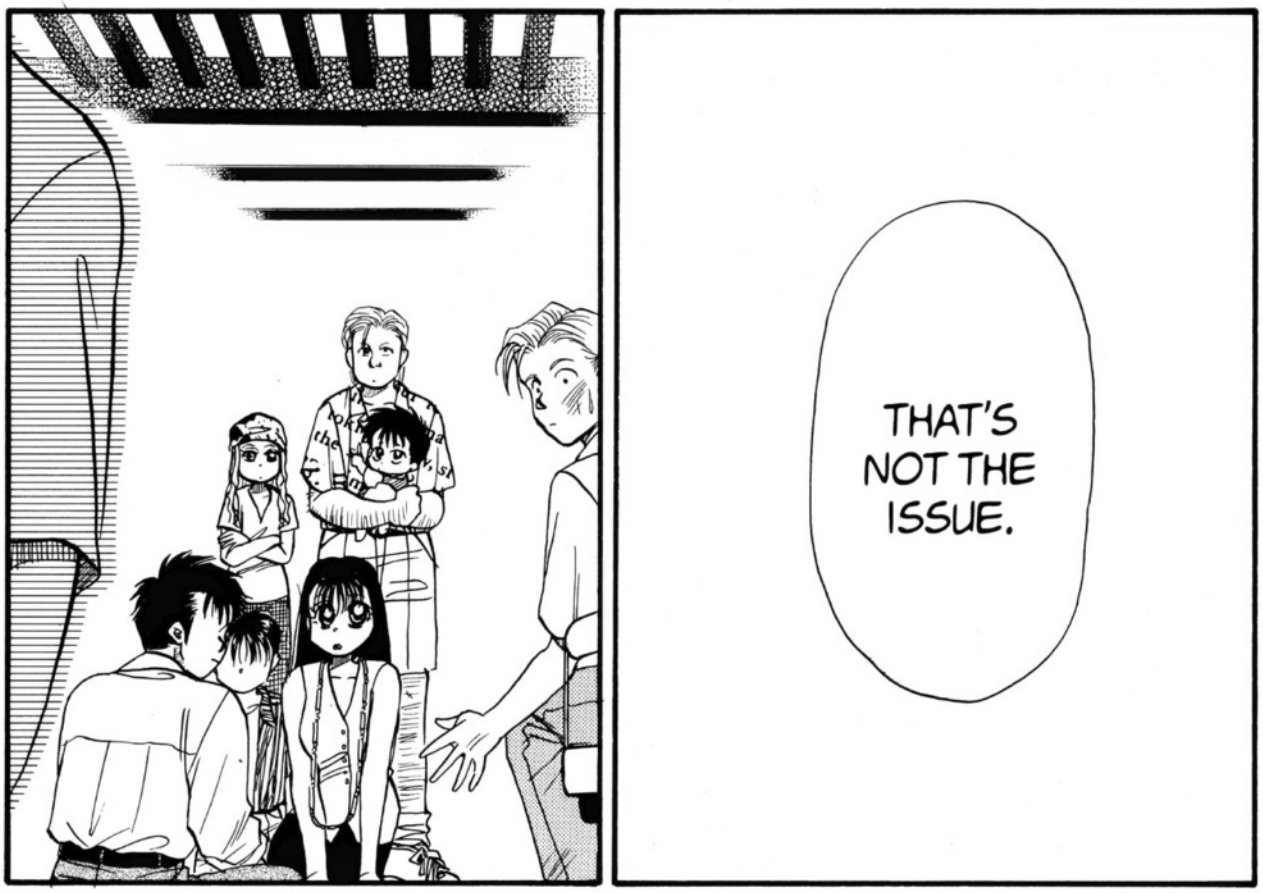
KISH...

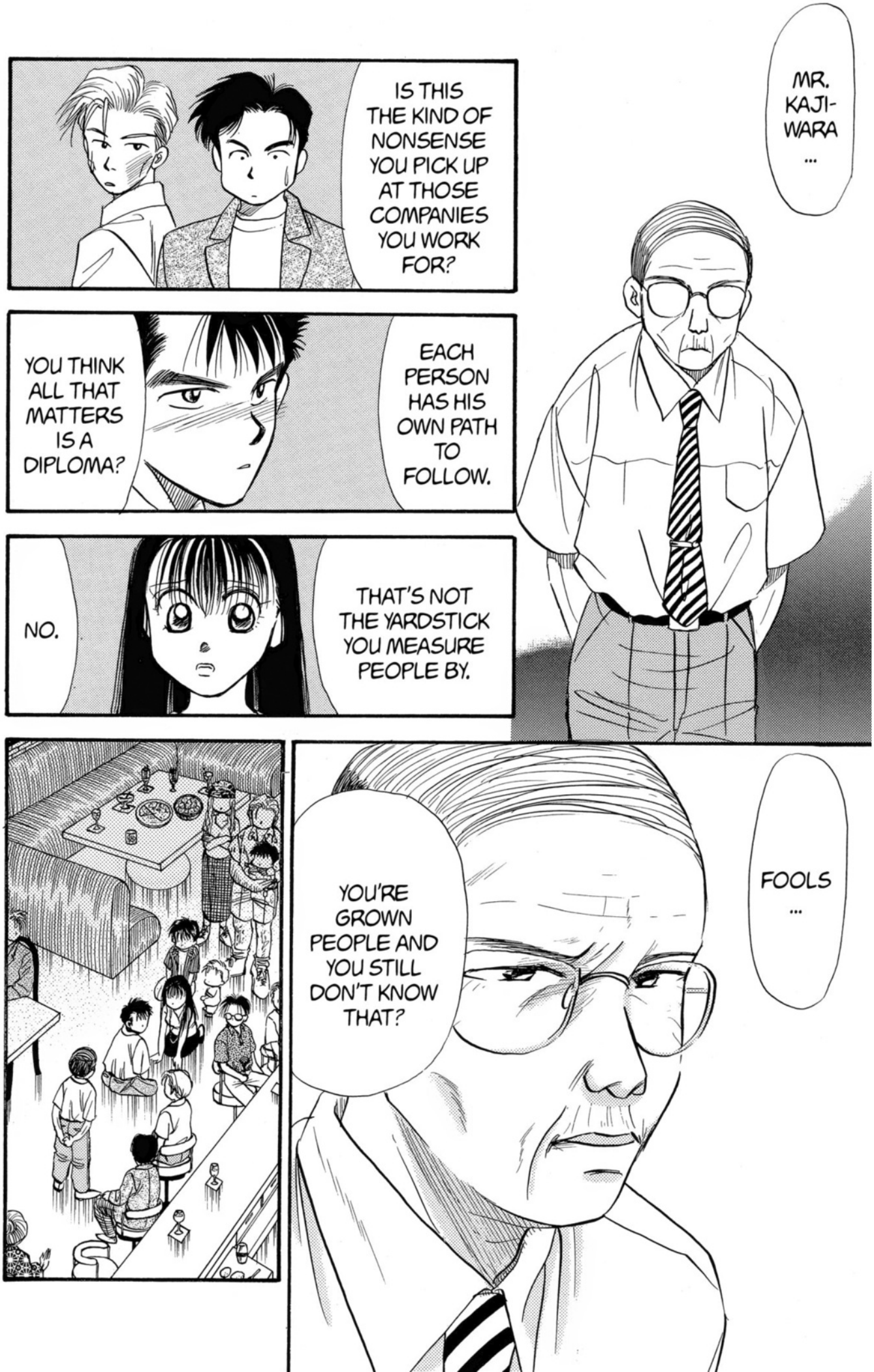

SEI-ICHI?
I TRIED MY BEST NOT TO EMBARRASS YOU.
I NEVER ...
...WEAR A SUIT, BUT I WENT AND BOUGHT ONE FOR THIS.
HMPH...
WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT A CLASS RE-UNION?

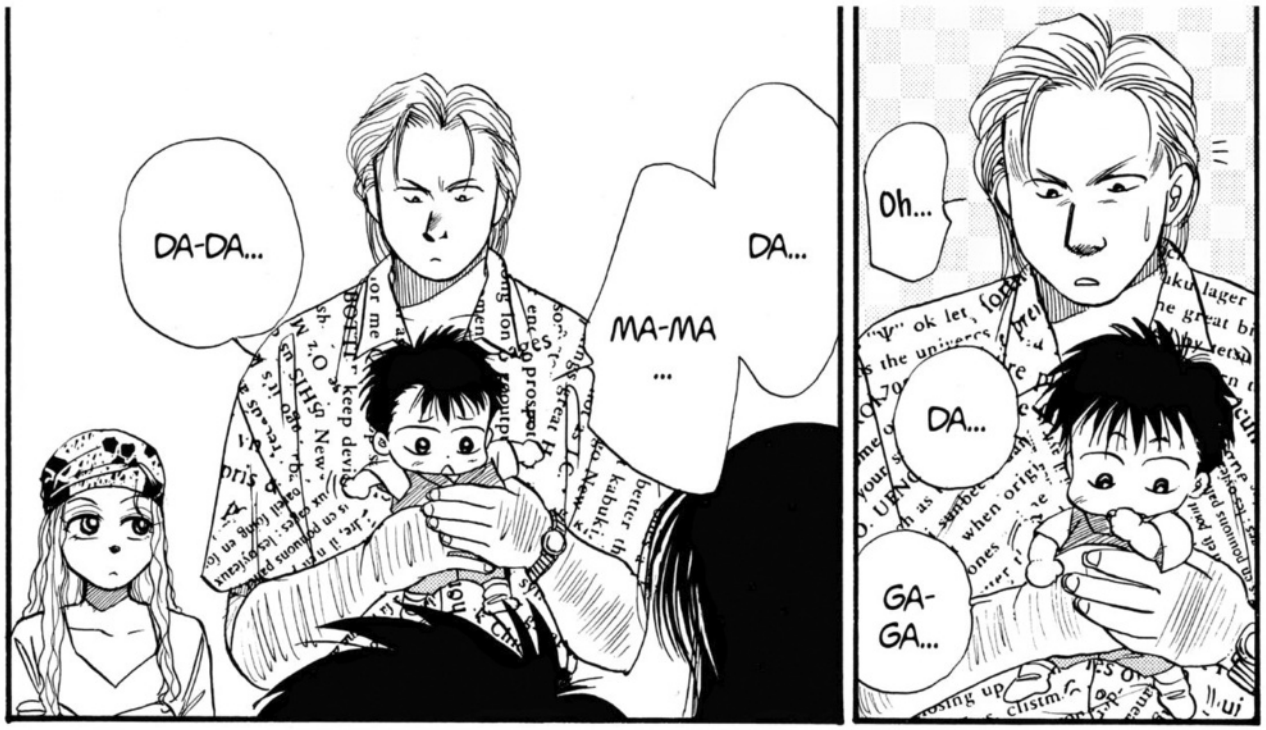
I'M SO...
I GUESS ...
...I REALLY AM A LOSER.

WHAT A BUF-FOON.
WHAT THE HECK ...
...AM I DOING?

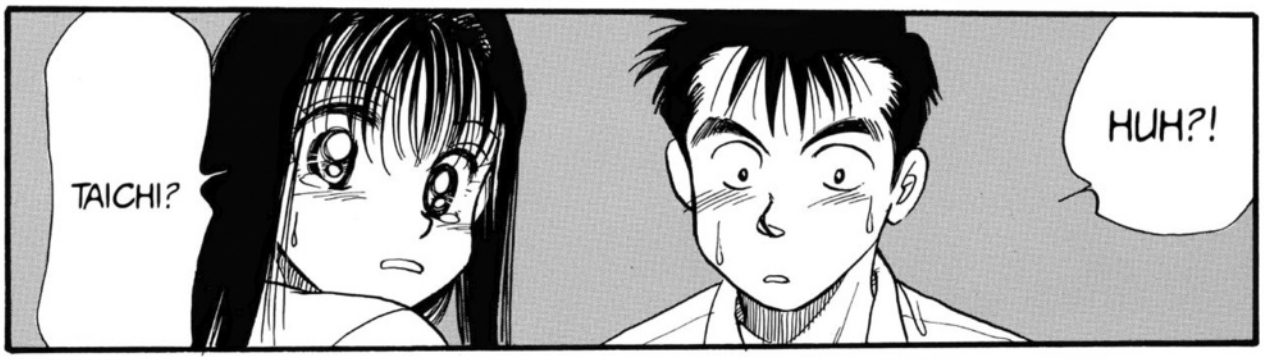

AW...
COME ON. IT'S NOT TOO LATE.
YOU CAN STILL GET YOUR G.E.D.

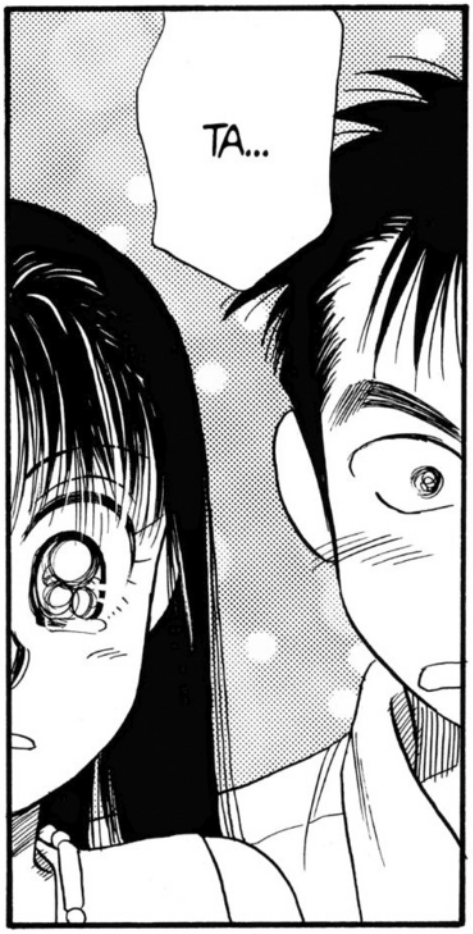

THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE.

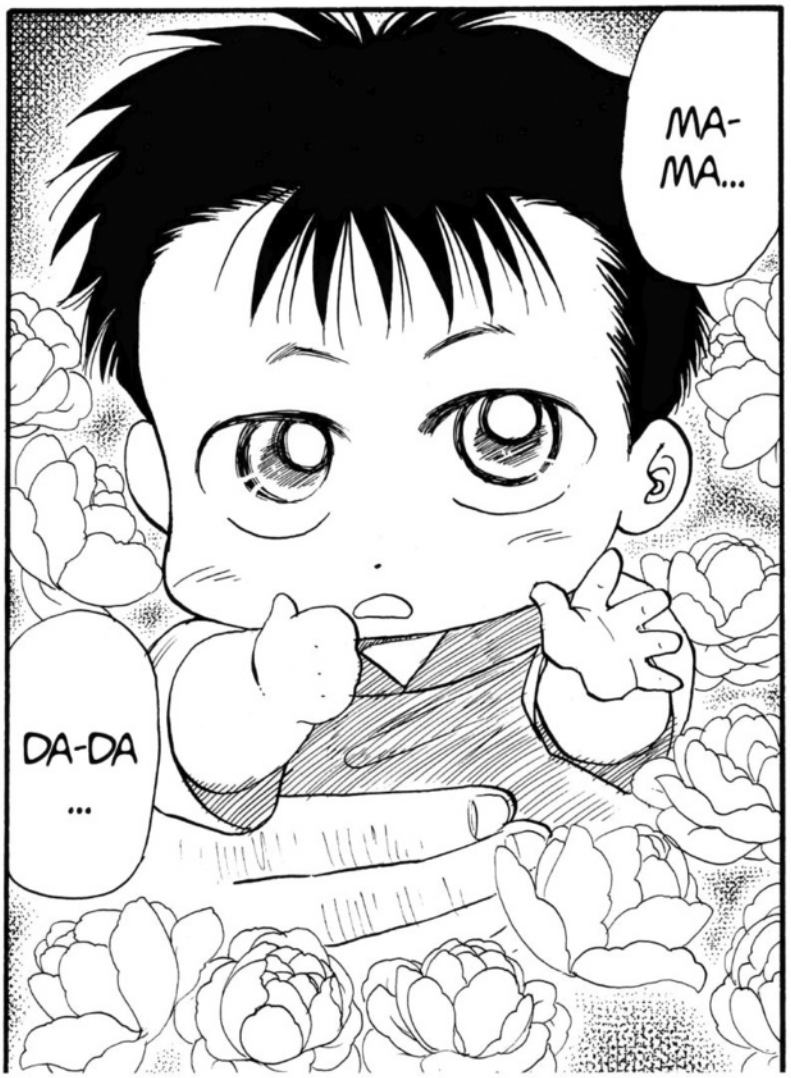

IS THIS THE KIND OF NONSENSE YOU PICK UP AT THOSE COMPANIES YOU WORK FOR?
MR. KAJI-WARA ...
YOU THINK ALL THAT MATTERS IS A DIPLOMA?
EACH PERSON HAS HIS OWN PATH TO FOLLOW.
NO.
THAT'S NOT THE YARDSTICK YOU MEASURE PEOPLE BY.
YOU'RE GROWN PEOPLE AND YOU STILL DON'T KNOW THAT?
FOOLS ...

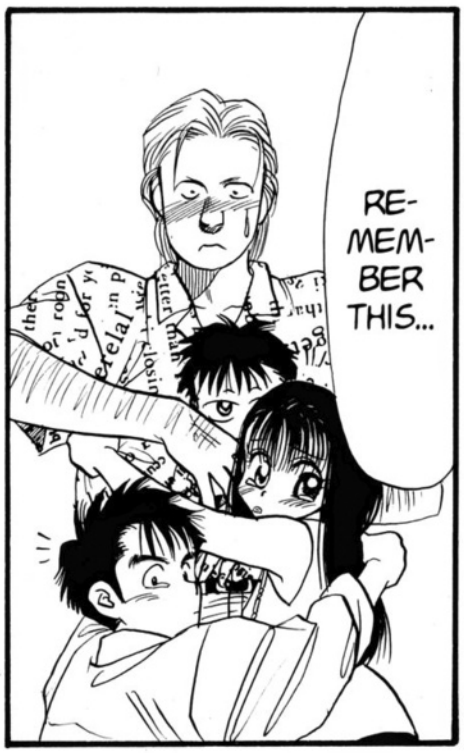

DA-DA...
DA...
MA-MA ...

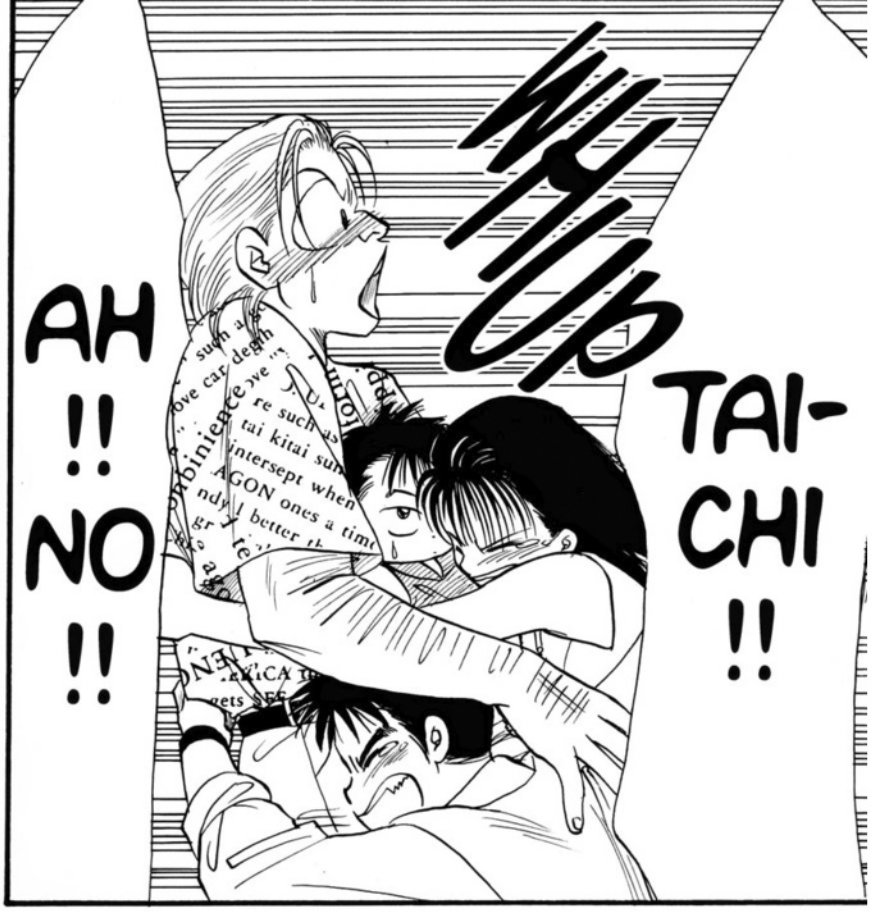
Oh...
DA...
GA-GA...


TAICHI?
HUH?!

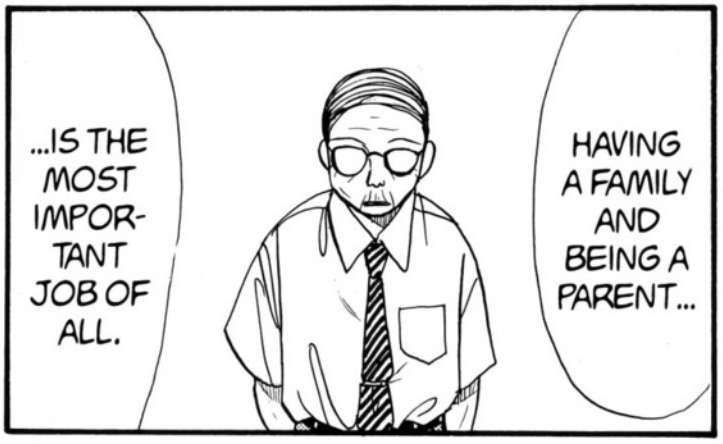

TA...


MA-MA...
DA-DA ...


RE-MEM-BER THIS...


AH !! NO !!
TAI-CHI !!

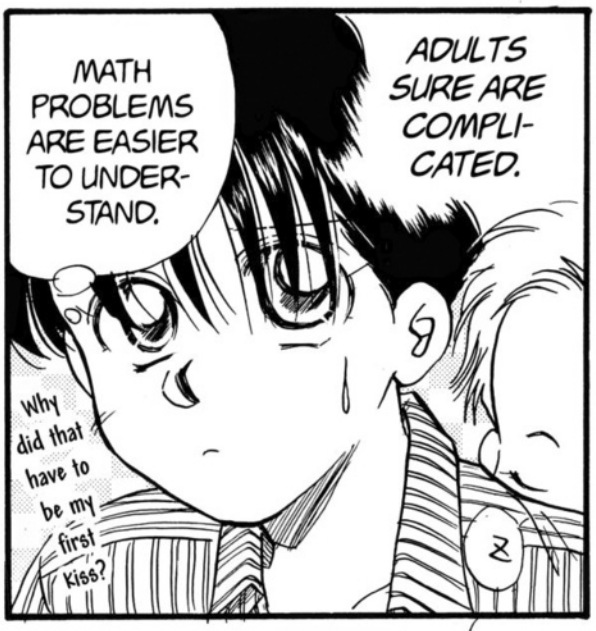
ALL RIGHT. CLASS DISMISSED.
NOW, LET'S ALL PLAY TOGETHER NICELY.

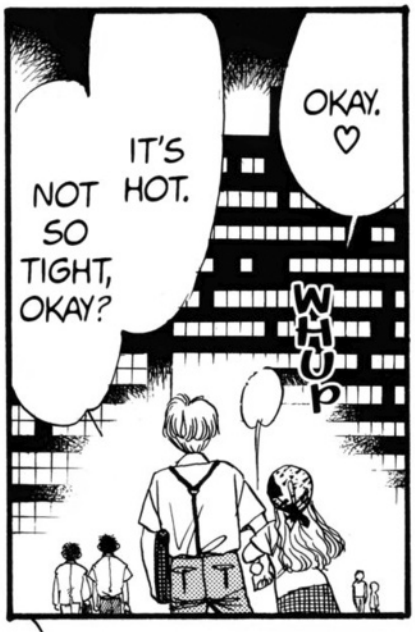

...IS THE MOST IMPOR-TANT JOB OF ALL.
HAVING A FAMILY AND BEING A PARENT...

THIS IS THE FINAL LESSON...
...THAT I CAN TEACH YOU.

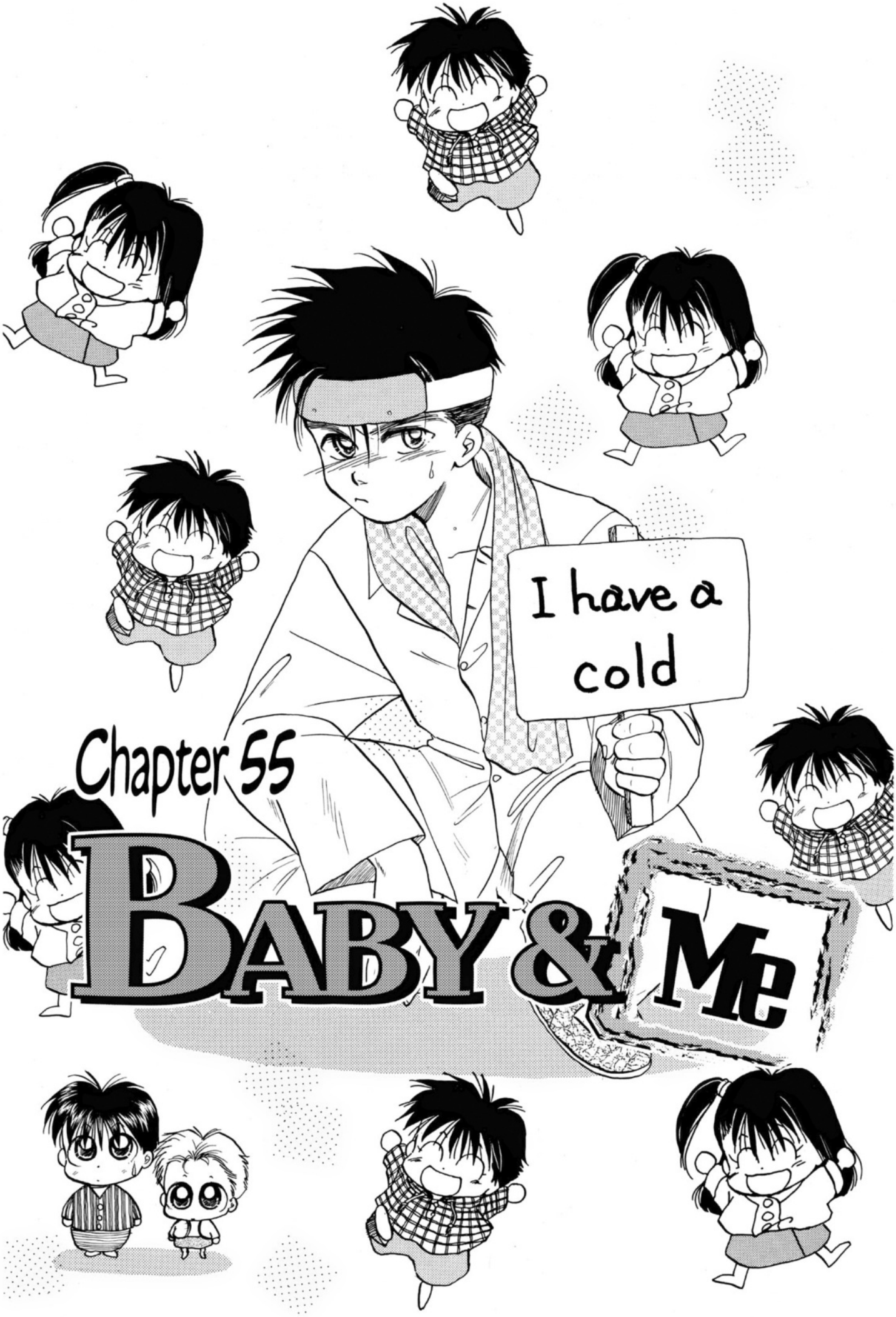
...IF THIS IS SOUNDING LIKE A SERMON.
I'M SORRY ...

HMM...
IT MADE ME THINK ...
MR. KAJI-WARA...
...IS A PRETTY COOL THING.
HAVING A TEACHER YOU CAN REALLY RESPECT...
YOU KNOW ...
...SEI-ICHI...
YEAH?
...HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH MY FRIEND.
THE REASON I TOOK YOU WITH ME...
I REALLY JUST...
...WANTED TO SHOW YOU OFF.
I'M SORRY YOU HAD SUCH A TER-RIBLE TIME.
...



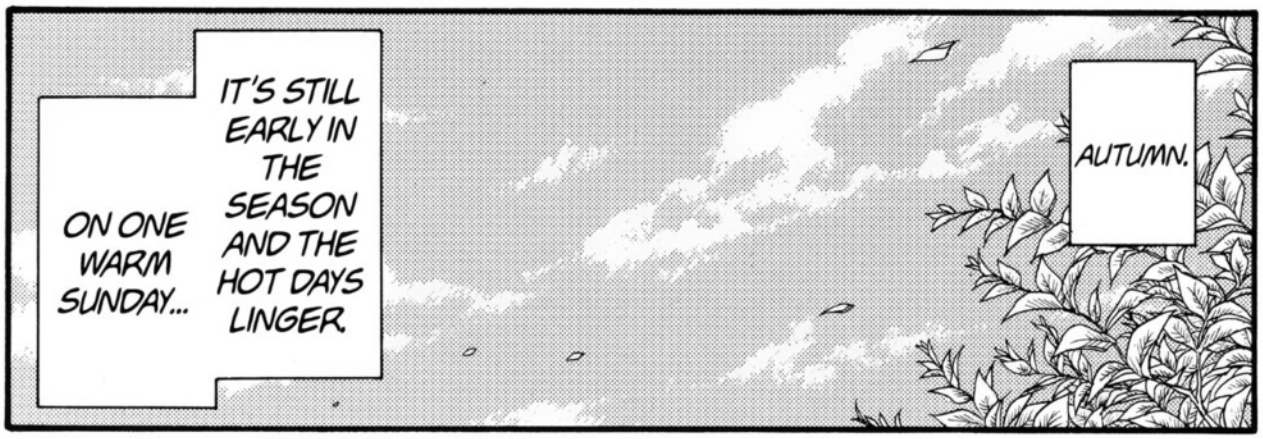


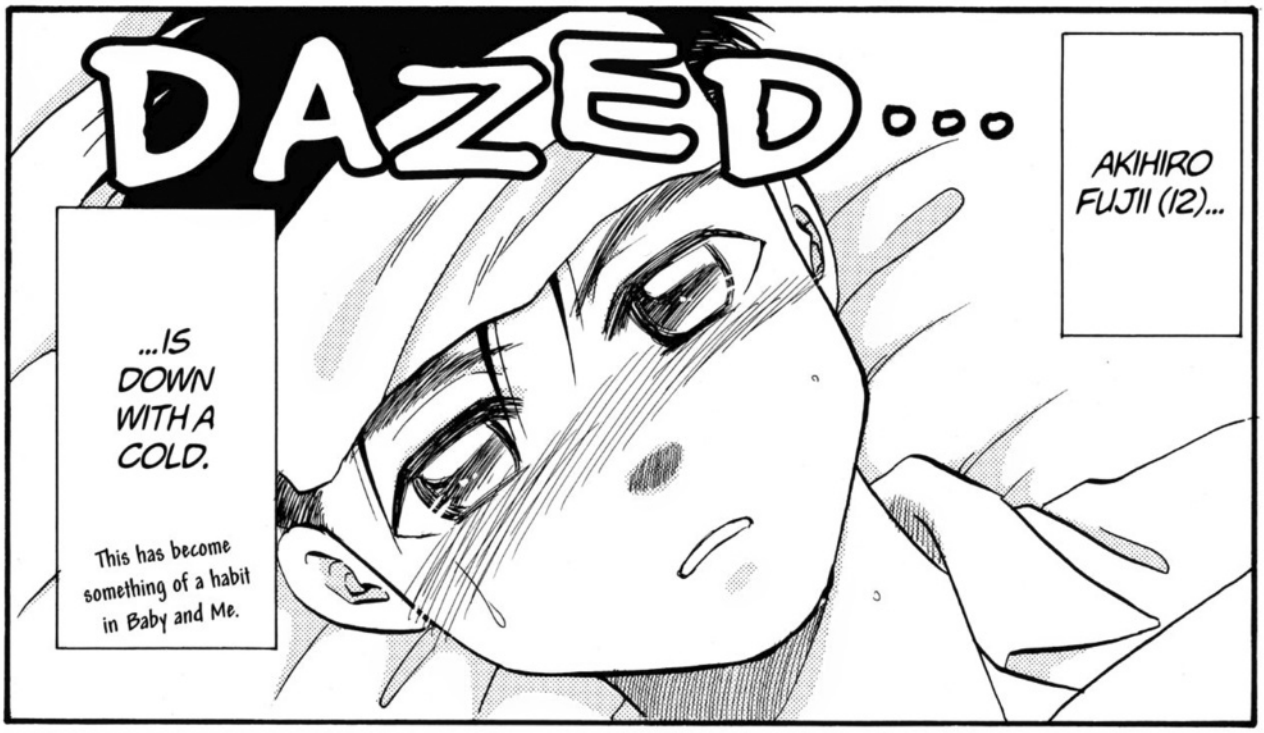
Chapter 54 / The End



Chapter 55

BABY & Me


AUTUMN.
IT'S STILL EARLY IN THE SEASON AND THE HOT DAYS LINGER.
ON ONE WARM SUNDAY...

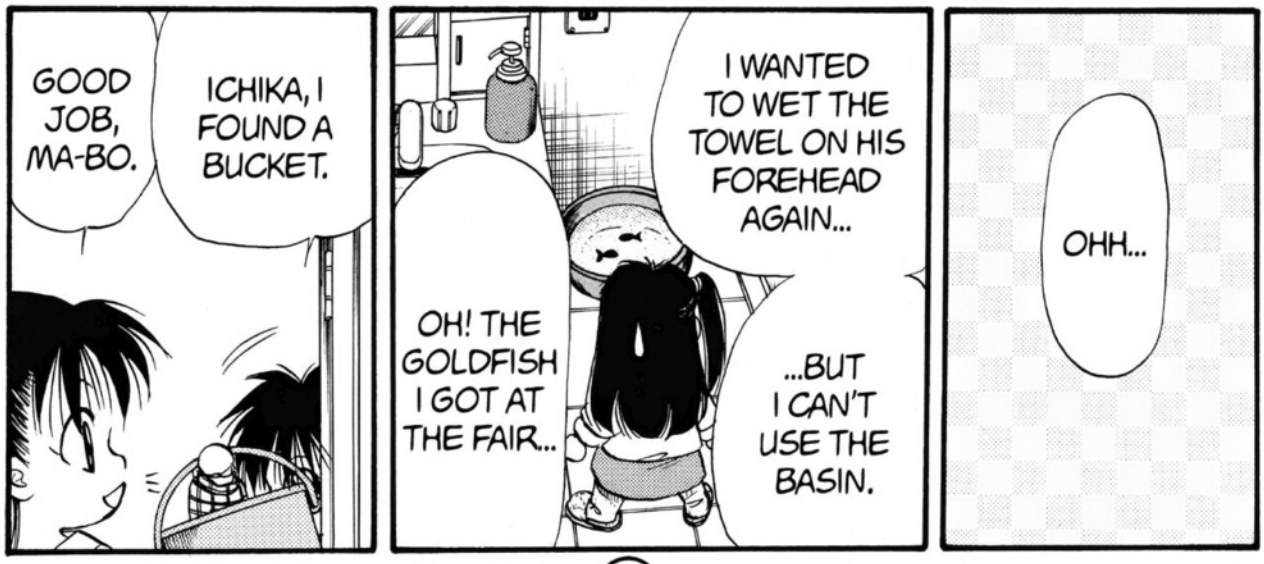

DAZED...
AKIHIRO FUJII (12)...
...IS DOWN WITH A COLD.
This has become something of a habit in Baby and Me.

MOM AND DAD ARE AT WORK.
AKEMI AND ASAKO WENT OUT TO SEE THEIR FRIENDS.
THOSE HEART-LESS... OHH...
ICHIKA AND MA-BO ARE HOME.
WEEN
WEEN
THEY'LL JUST MAKE ME FEEL WORSE.

AKIHIRO, I'M GOING OUT. THERE'S SOME SOUP. YOU CAN HAVE IT FOR LUNCH.
HUH? WHERE IS EVERY-BODY?
TOMOYA FUJII (17)

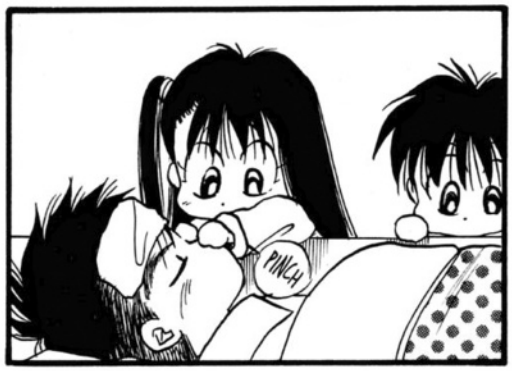
KRASH
EEEEK!!
WHUPP
!
TOMOYA SAYS THAT...
...BUT THOSE TWO AREN'T EASY TO IGNORE.
WEEZ
WELL ...
IGNORE THEM.
I THINK THIS FITS WIFF THIS.
LET'S STICK IT BACK TOGETHER WITH TAPE.
HOLD THEM STILL AND I'LL TAPE THEM UP.
OH, BOY...
M-MA-BO, WHAT'LL WE DO?
WHAT HAP-PENED?
KREEEK
WEEZ
HEY, YOU TWO ...
WE'RE GONNA GET IT.
WE BROKE AKEMI'S MIRROR.
Ouch...

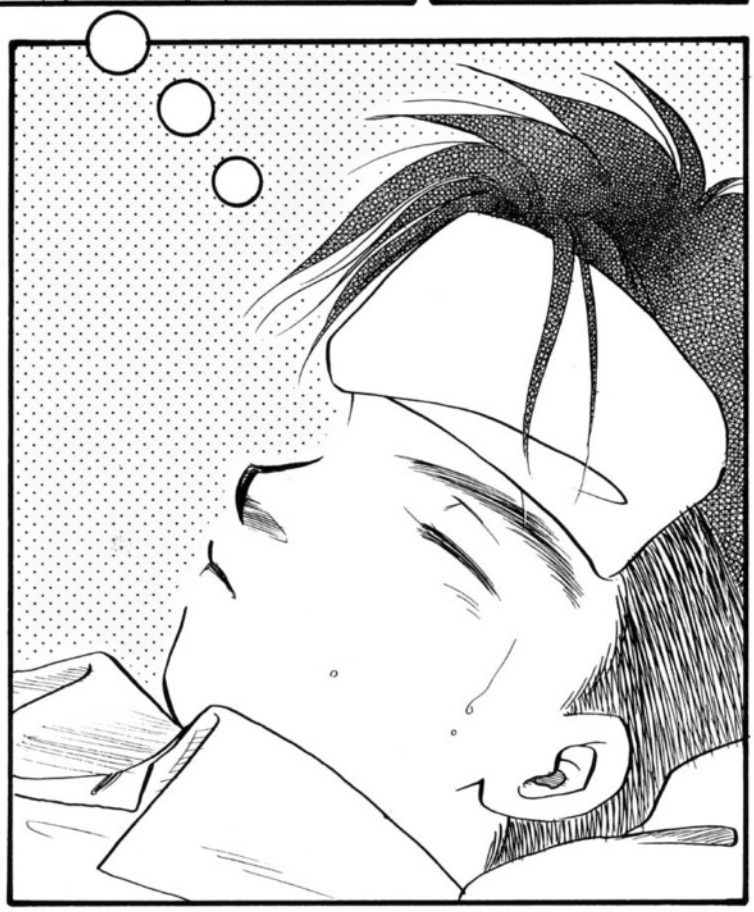
WE'RE JUST READING PICTURE BOOKS TOGETHER NICELY.
HUH?!
NOFFING.
SWAY
SWAY
DIZZY...
DO THEY THINK...
...A HUGE CRASH LIKE THAT?!
...ANYBODY'S GONNA MISS...
PINN
PINN
SWAY
SWAY
HE DOESN'T KNOW.
PHEW...
WILL YOU PLEASE BE QUIET?
WEEZ
WEEZ
IT'S NO GOOD... I'M TOO WEAK TO YELL AT THEM.
OKAY!
HEY! MA-BO, YOU AND I CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM!!
HMM ...
HE'S WEALLY SICK.
POOR AKIHIWO. HE CATCHED A COLD.

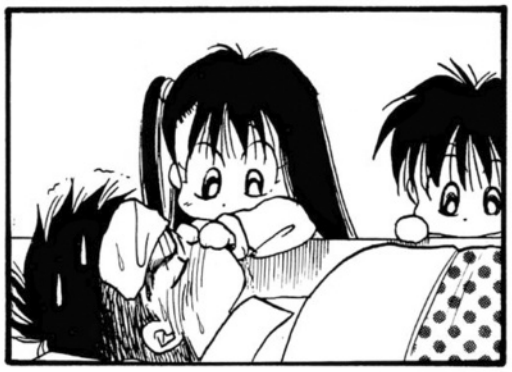

GOOD JOB, MA-BO.
ICHIKA, I FOUND A BUCKET.

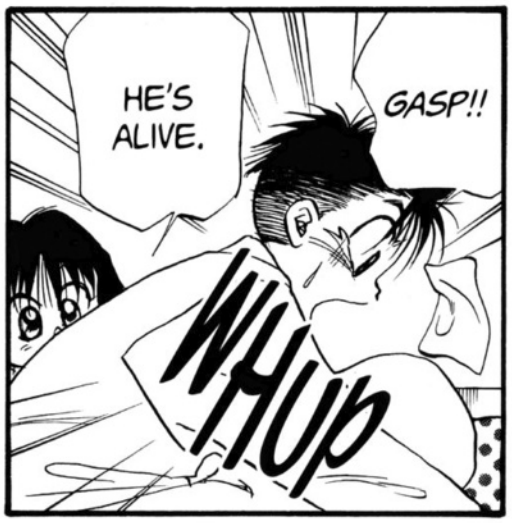
I WANTED TO WET THE TOWEL ON HIS FOREHEAD AGAIN...
OH! THE GOLDFISH I GOT AT THE FAIR...
...BUT I CAN'T USE THE BASIN.

OHH...


PINCH



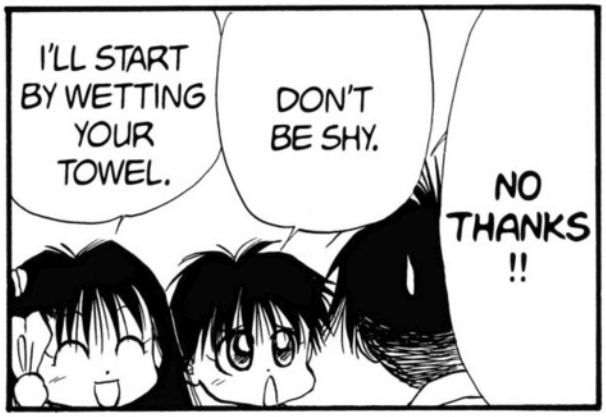



HE'S ALIVE.
GASP!!
WHUP

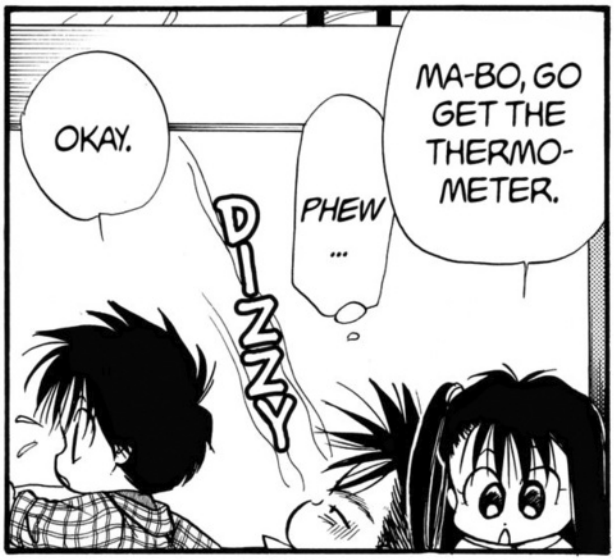
...

WE DECIDED THAT WE'RE GOING TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
TWITCH

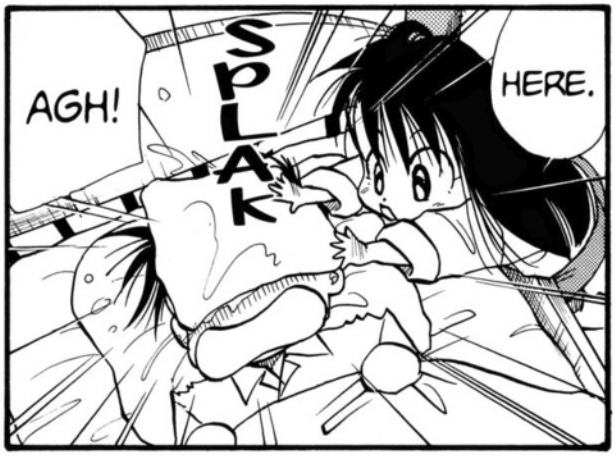
ARE YOU TWO TRYING TO KILL ME?!
WEEZ
WELL, YOU WEREN'T MOVING.
WEEZ

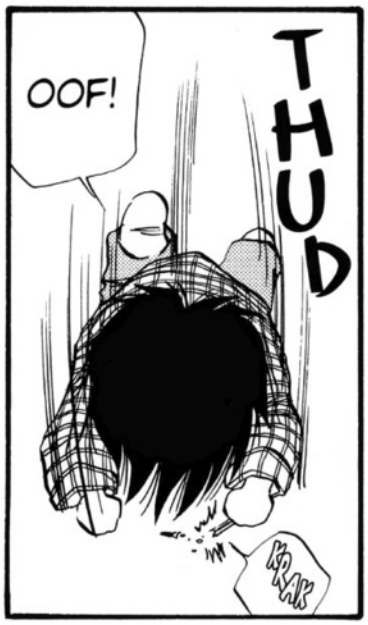

I'LL START BY WETTING YOUR TOWEL.
DON'T BE SHY.
NO THANKS !!

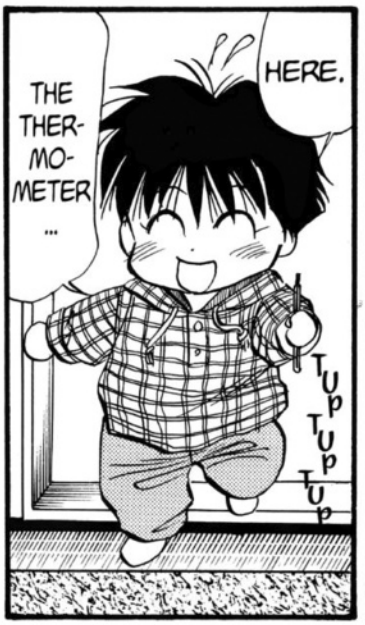
I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH.
WHAT THE...? YOU HAVE TO WRING IT OUT!
Hmph.


MA-BO, GO GET THE THERMO-METER.
OKAY.
PHEW ...
DIZZY

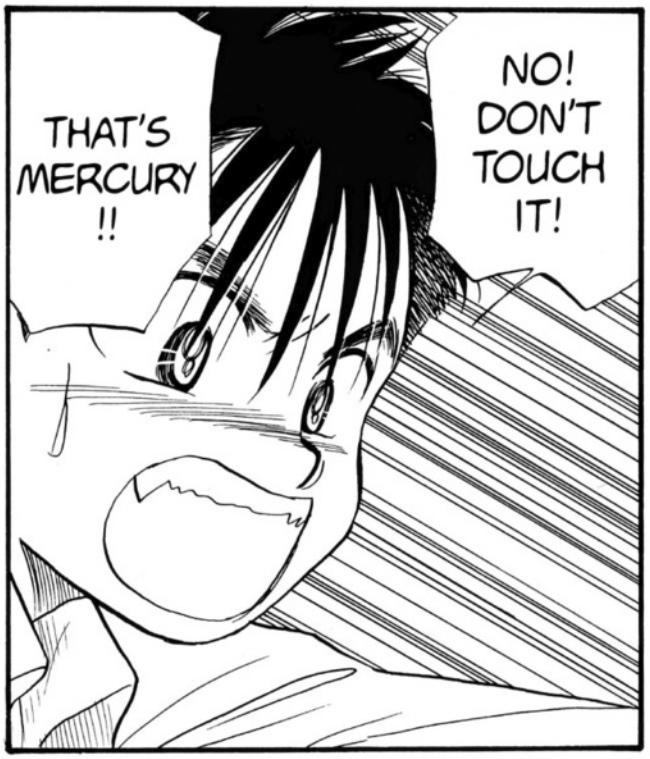
...
SPLAT
FOR BATHROOM USE
DO NOT USE FOR ANYTHING ELSE

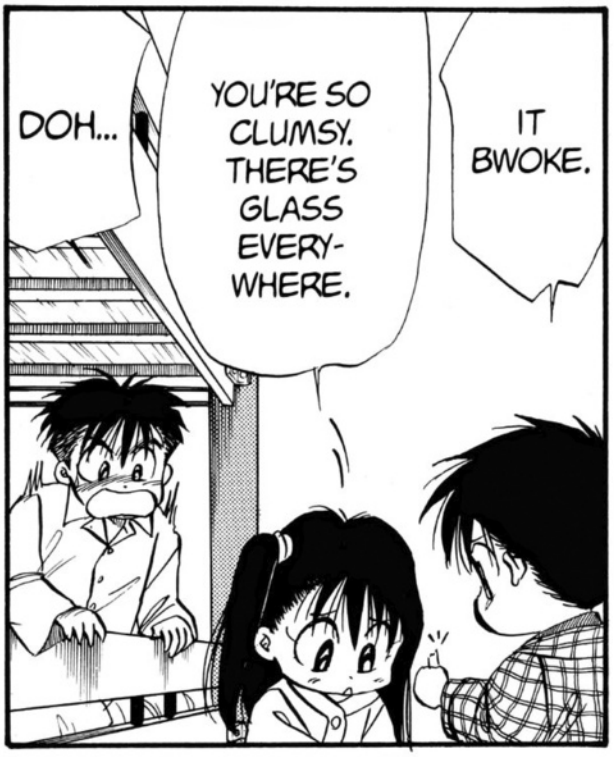

HERE.
AGH!
SPLAK


OOF!
THUD
KRAK

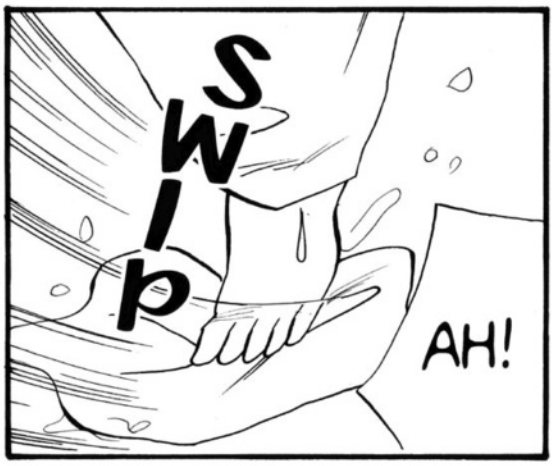

THE THER-MO-METER ...
HERE.
TUP TUP TUP

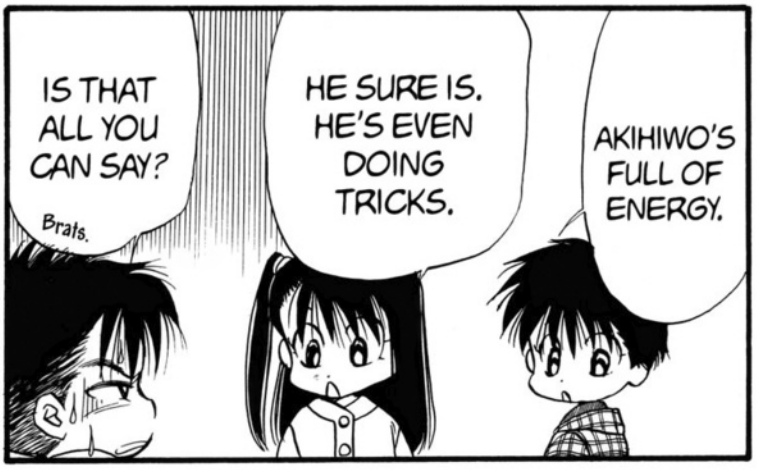
ICHIKA ...
TH-THIS CAME FROM THE BATH-ROOM...
BATHROOM USE


THAT'S MERCURY !!
NO! DON'T TOUCH IT!


DOH...
YOU'RE SO CLUMSY. THERE'S GLASS EVERY-WHERE.
IT BWOKE.

FWUMP

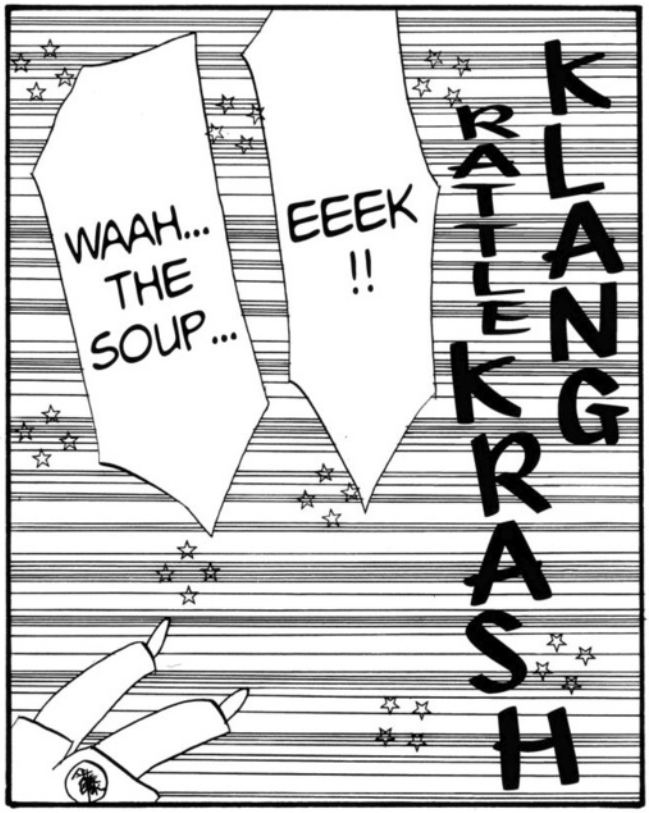

SWIP
AH!


IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY?
Brats.
HE SURE IS. HE'S EVEN DOING TRICKS.
AKIHIWO'S FULL OF ENERGY.

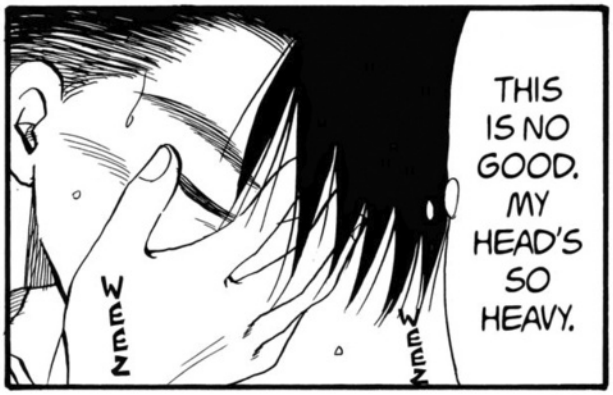
...

UGH... PLEASE DON'T DO ANY-THING...
I'LL HEAT THE SOUP AND BRING IT TO YOU.
YOU MUST BE HUNGRY.

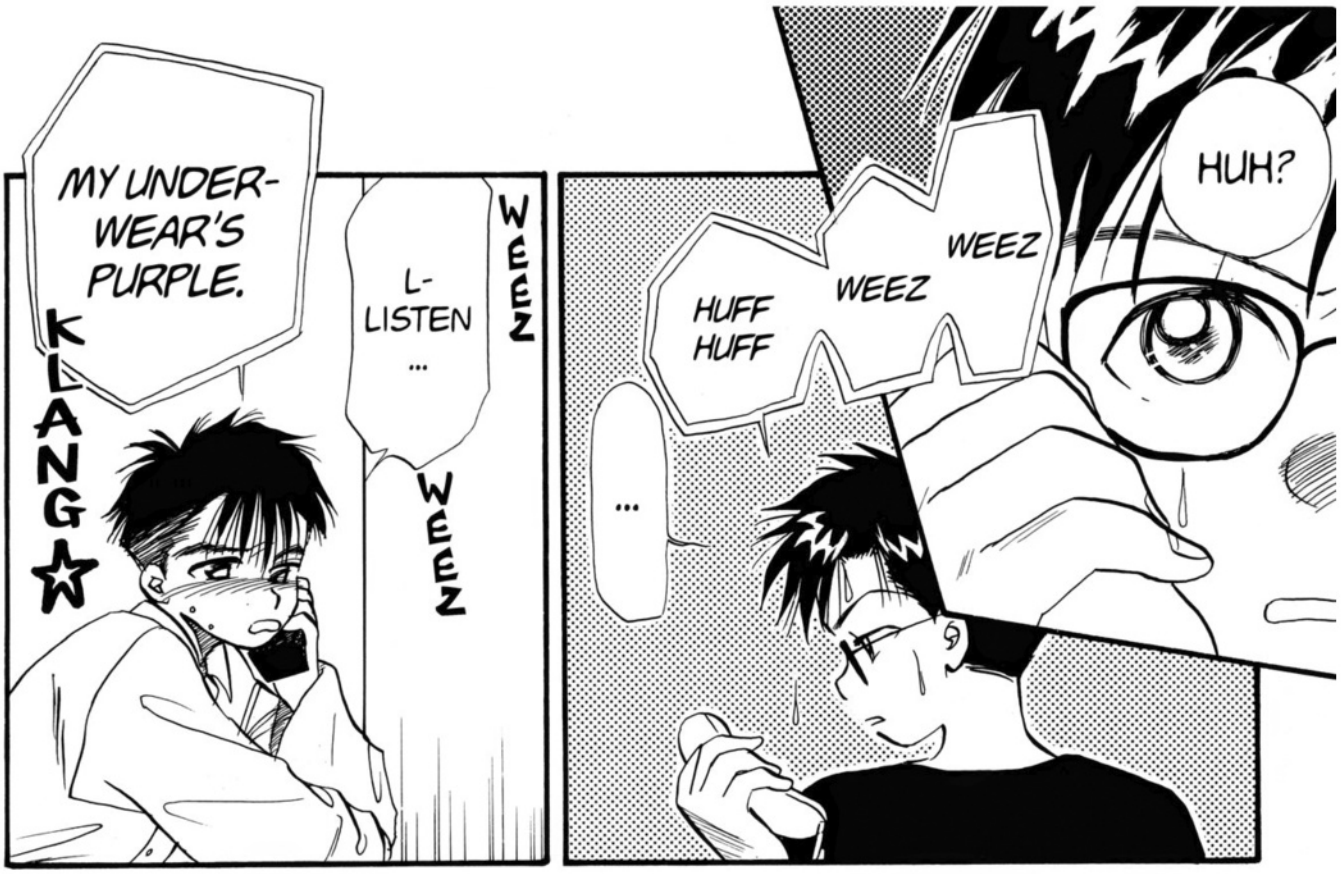
OH.
WHAT IS IT?
WHAP


WAAH... THE SOUP...
EEEK !!
KLANG
RATTLE
KRASH

HUH?
SHIVER
SHIVER


THIS IS NO GOOD. MY HEAD'S SO HEAVY.
WEEZ
WEEZ

TH-THOSE TWO...
WEEZ
WEEZ
...ARE GONNA KILL ME!!
THE FEVER HAS FRIED FUJII'S MENTAL CIRCUITS AND HE CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT.
HEEE
HEE HEE HEE
SUFFER!
SUFFER!
KAKKAK
RRRRING
103
MORIGUCHI
HUH?
WEEZ
AKI-HIWO ...
MORI-GUCHI HERE.
HELLO?
RRRRINGKLAK
WEEZ
...
WE DWOPPED THE SOUP AND THERE'S NOFFING TO EAT.
WE'RE HUNGRY.


MY UNDER-WEAR'S PURPLE.
KLANG☆
L-LISTEN ...
WEEZ
WEEZ
HUH?
WEEZ
WEEZ
HUFF HUFF
...

RRING
RRING

OOH... SOME-BODY... PLEASE TAKE THESE KIDS...
I'M HUNGWY ...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, AKI-HIRO?
DARN.

SOME PERVERT.
WHO WAS THAT ON THE PHONE?

?
THUMP KLUNK

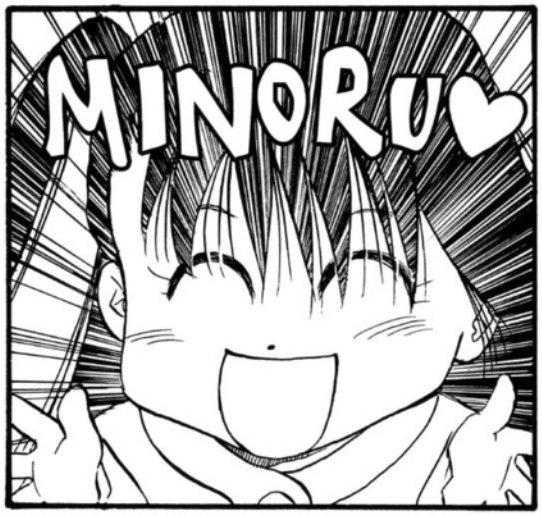
WEEZ
WEEZ

ENOKI RESI-DENCE.
HELLO...

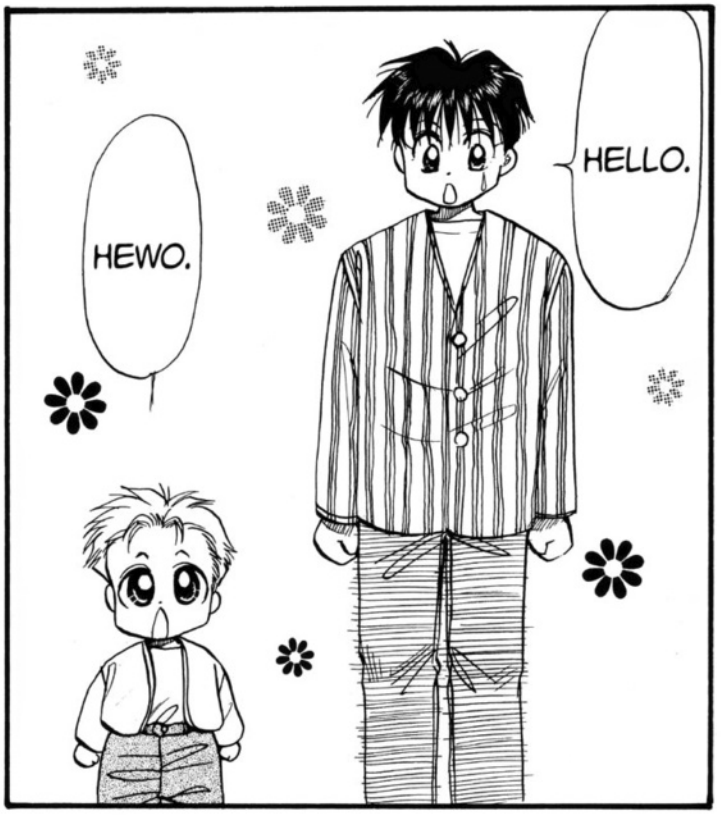
H-HEY... WHAT ABOUT ME?
WEEEZ
WEEEZ
I'M HUNGRY ...

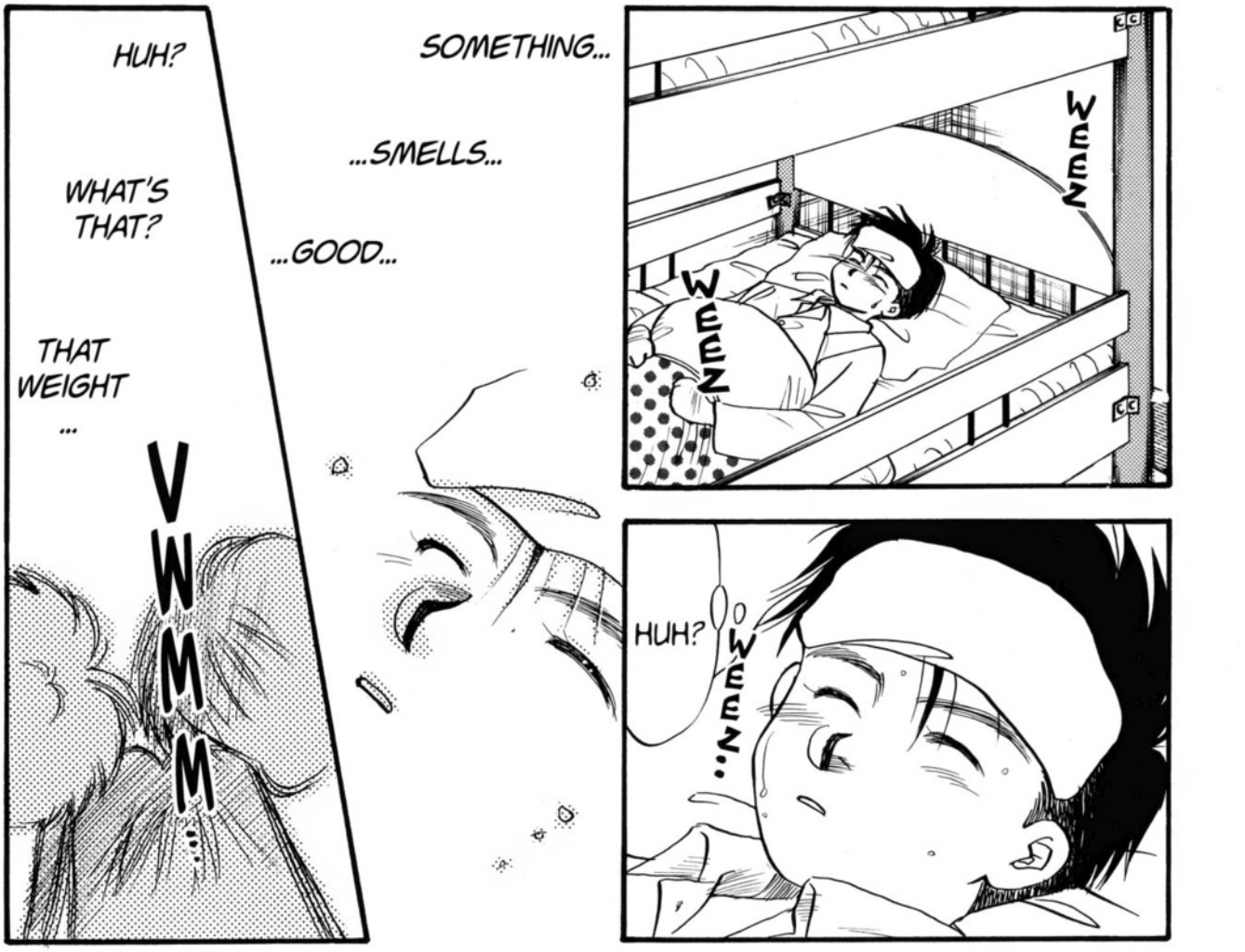
ICHIKA? WHAT HAP-PENED? I JUST HEARD SOME-THING FALL.
HELLO, IS THIS MINORU'S BIG BROTHER ?
UH-HUH...
YOU SEE ...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
AKI-HIRO ...
HUH ?
WAS THAT FUJII?

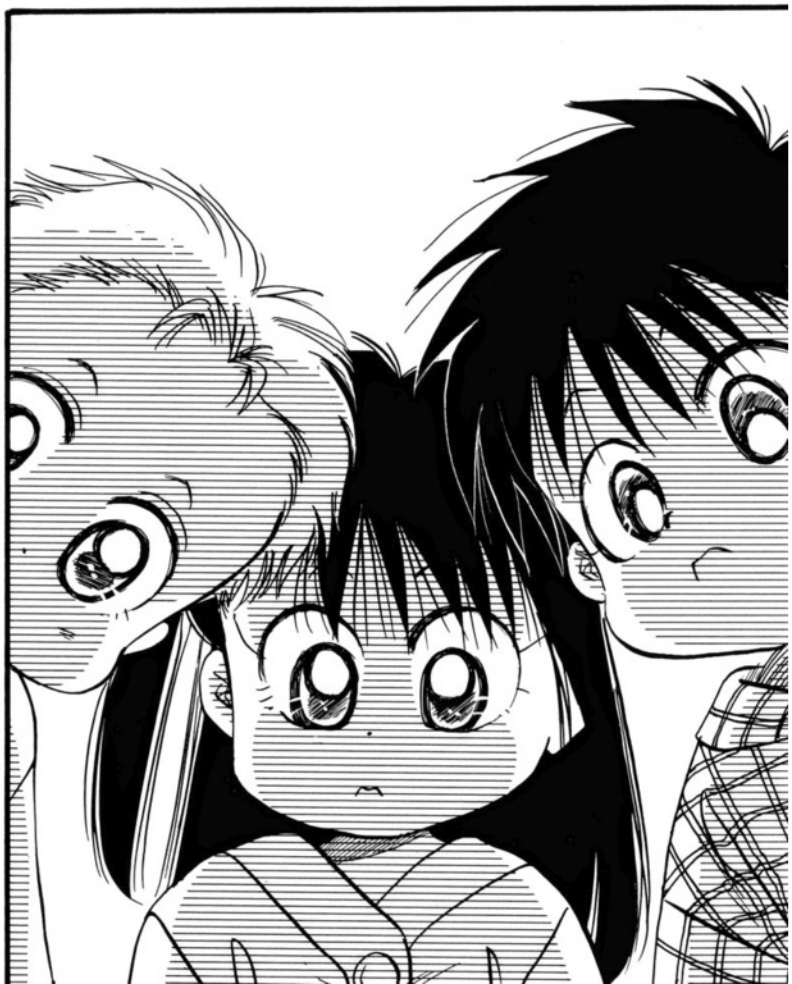

MINORU

UH... ICHIKA ...
WHERE'S YOUR BROTHER ?
COME IN!
SKIP
SKIP


HELLO.
HEWO.


WEEN
WEEN
HUH?
WEEN...
SOMETHING...
...SMELLS...
...GOOD...
HUH?
WHAT'S THAT?
THAT WEIGHT ...
VWMMM...

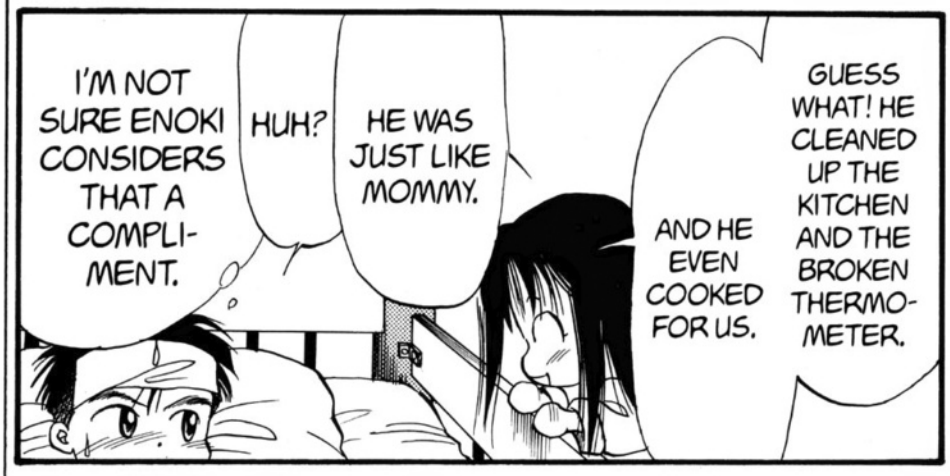
...
SQUASH...
AKIHIWO, ARE YOU ALL WIGHT?
OH...

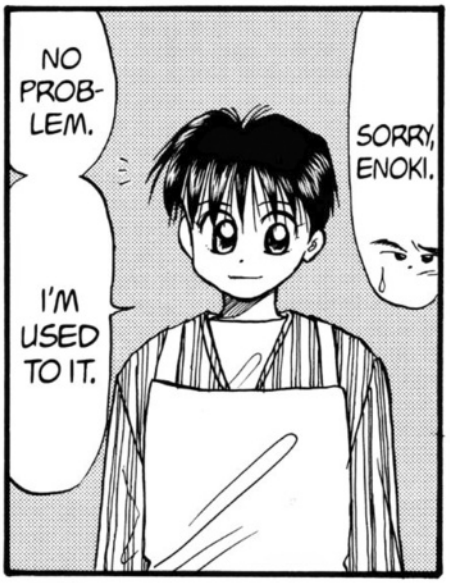


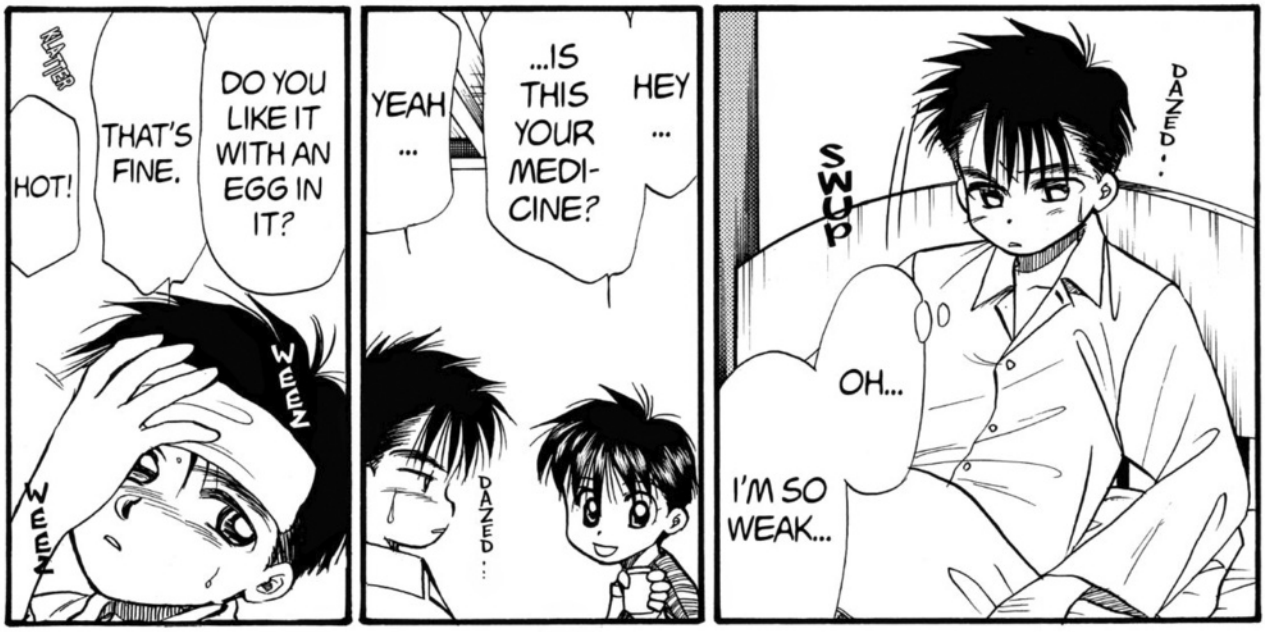
Author's Note: Part 5

I want to get drunk. I don't know if I can hold my liquor or what, but I drink whatever people pour me. Even if I feel like my speech is slurred and I'm tipsy, the only thing people notice is that my cheeks get hot and a little red, so they think I can hold my liquor well. Is that good or bad?

However, I never forget myself. Even if I get drunk and slur my words, and stagger, and laugh like a fool, my mind is clear as a bell. But sometimes, when things are so bad that I get really sad and sick of everything, I wish I could get drunk enough to forget myself...

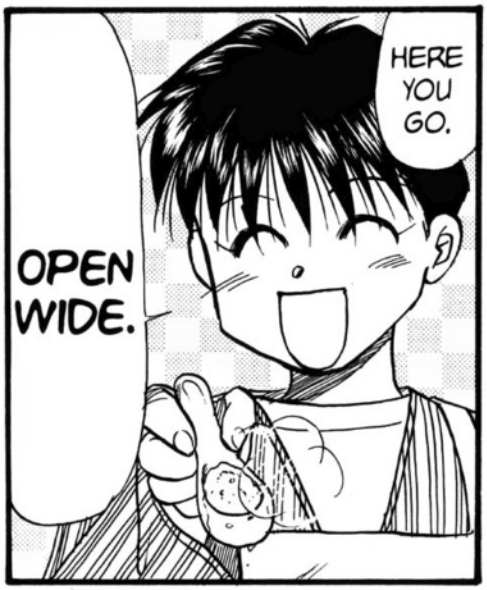





DO YOU LIKE IT WITH AN EGG IN IT?
THAT'S FINE.
HOT!
WEEZ
WEEZ

HEY ...
...IS THIS YOUR MEDI-CINE?
YEAH ...
DAZED...

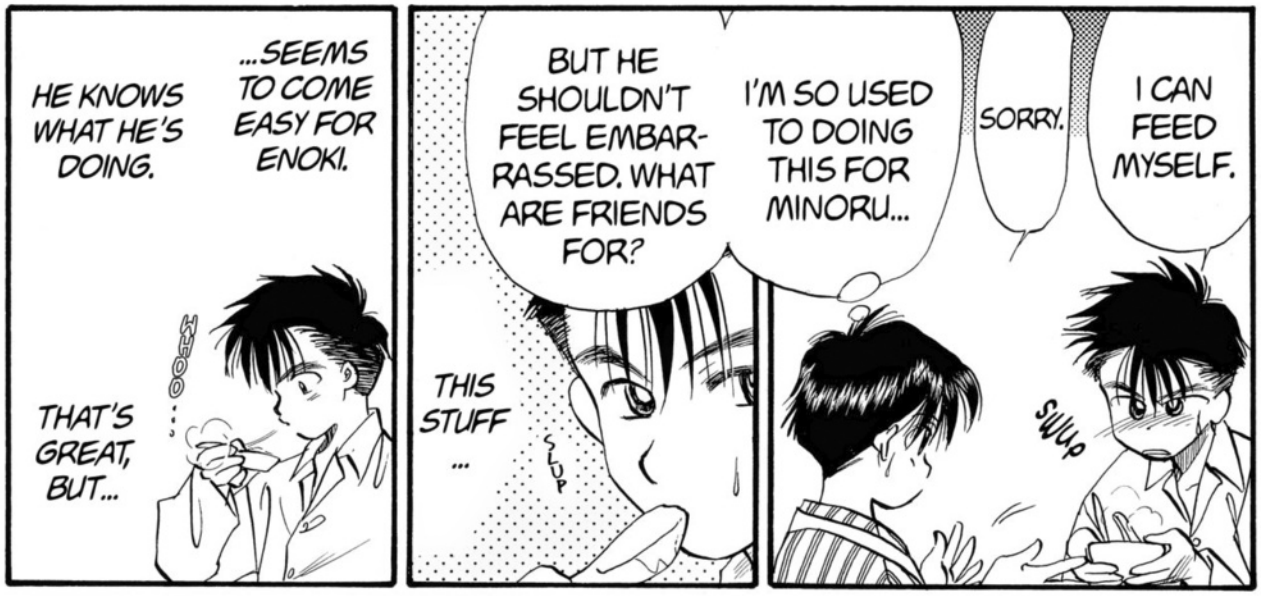
DAZED...
SWUP
OH...
I'M SO WEAK...

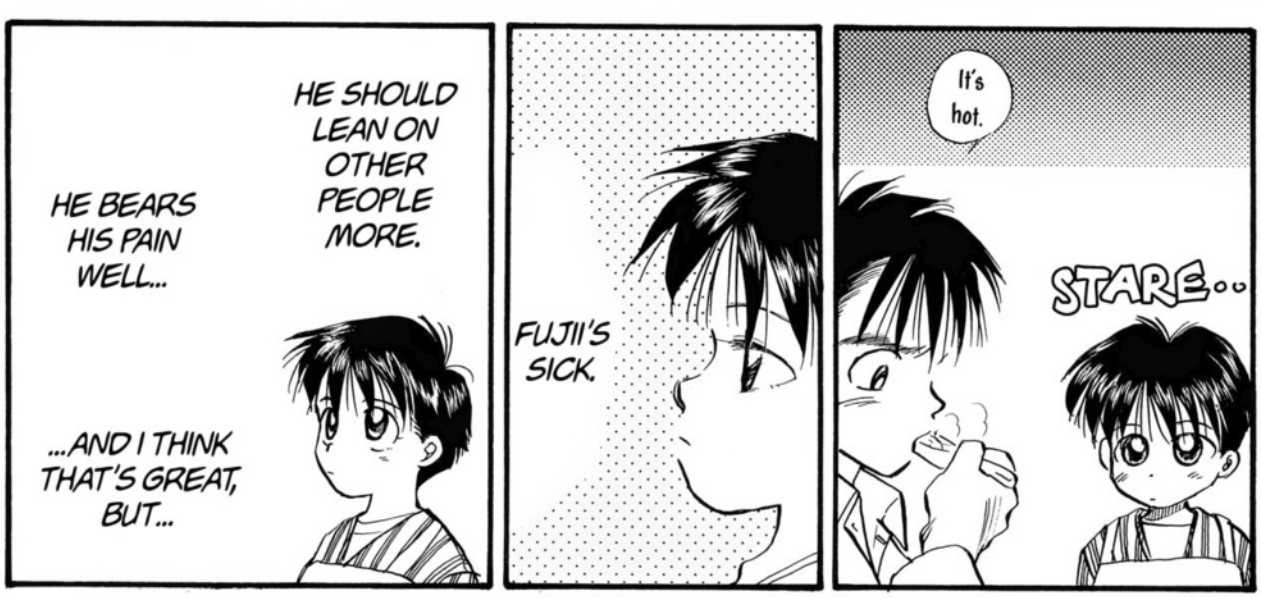

HERE YOU GO.
OPEN WIDE.

MINORU CAN TAKE HIS FOOD HOT, BUT I CAN'T.
KEOO

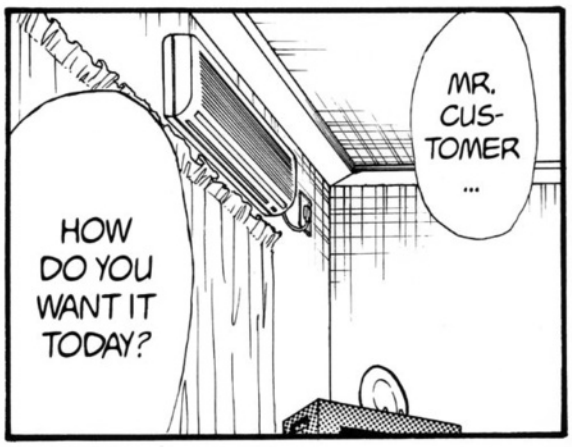
I CAN'T TAKE HOT STUFF.
WORK
IT'S HOT. IS THAT OKAY?
OKAY.
SWIP
SWIP
WORK

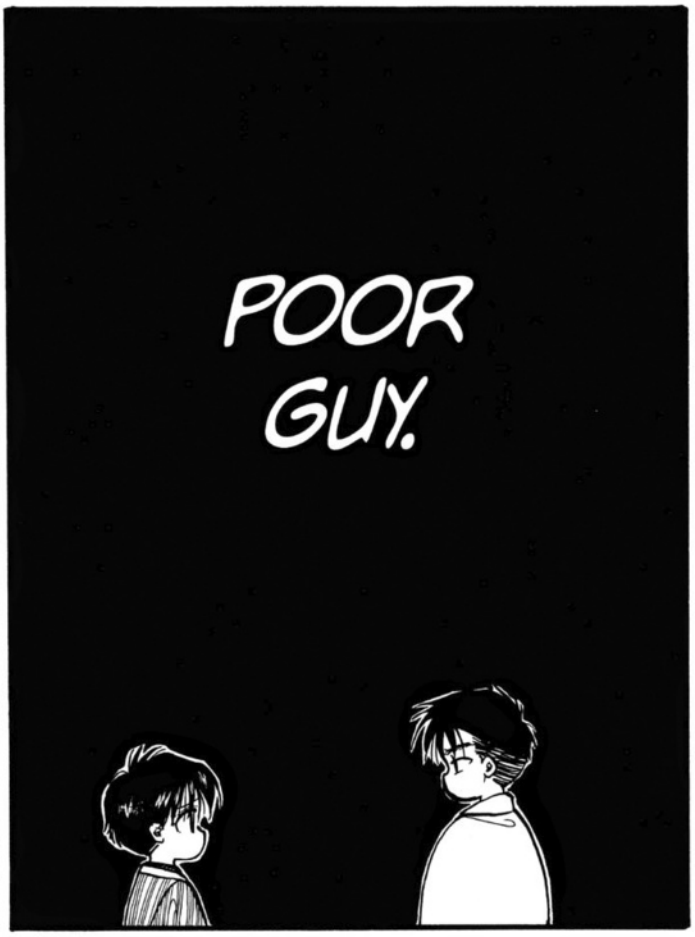
HUH?
HEY.

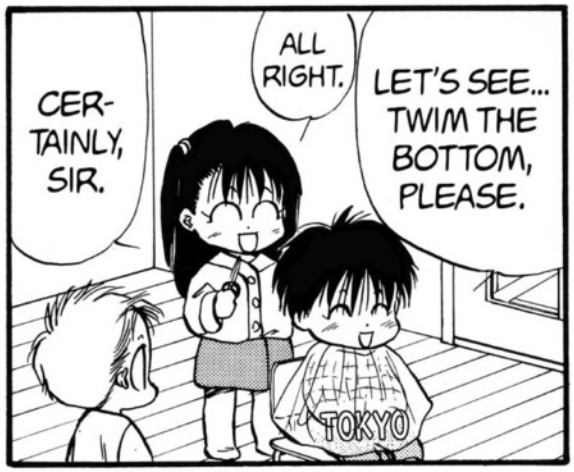

HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.
...SEEMS TO COME EASY FOR ENOKI.
THAT'S GREAT, BUT...
SUUU
BUT HE SHOULDN'T FEEL EMBARRASSED. WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR?
I'M SO USED TO DOING THIS FOR MINORU...
THIS STUFF ...
SLUP
SORRY.
I CAN FEED MYSELF.
SUUUP

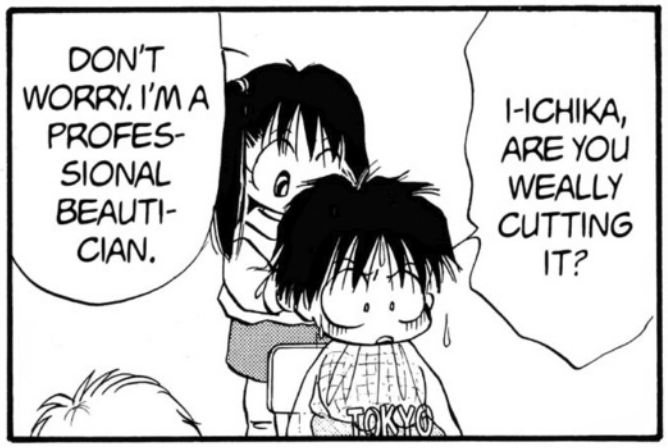

HE BEARS HIS PAIN WELL...
HE SHOULD LEAN ON OTHER PEOPLE MORE.
...AND I THINK THAT'S GREAT, BUT...
FUJII'S SICK.
It's hot.
STARE...

...I GUESS HE HAS TO BE THAT WAY.


MR. CUS-TOMER ...
HOW DO YOU WANT IT TODAY?


POOR GUY.

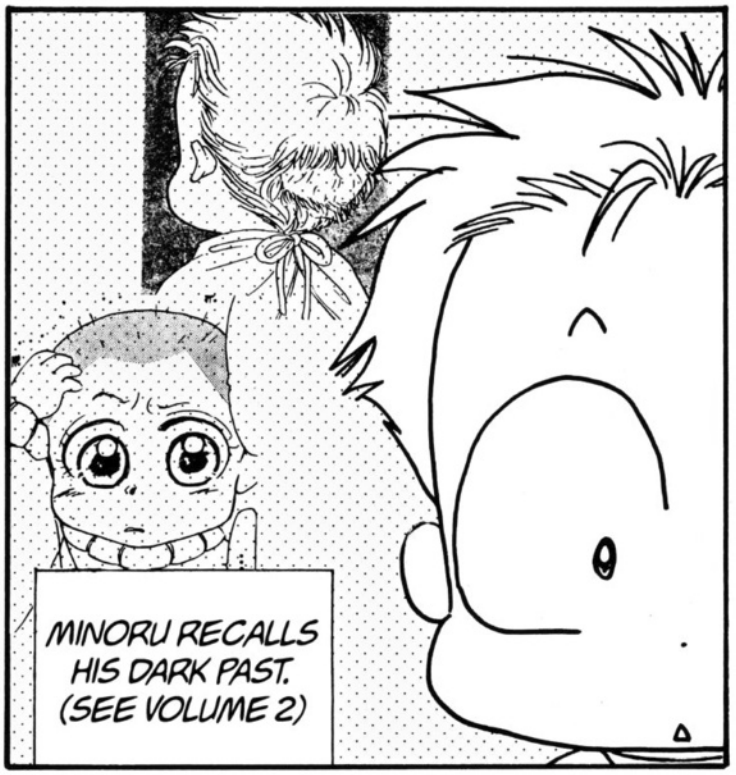

CER-TAINLY, SIR.
ALL RIGHT.
LET'S SEE... TWIM THE BOTTOM, PLEASE.
TOKYO

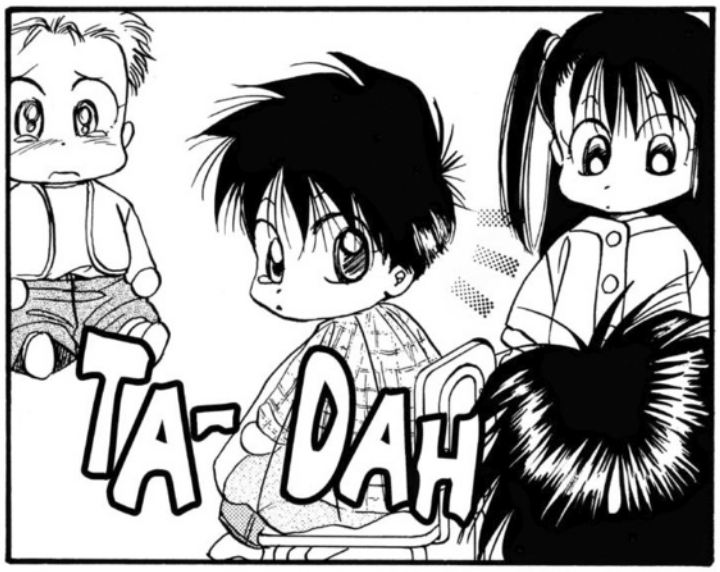

DON'T WORRY. I'M A PROFES-SIONAL BEAUTI-CIAN.
I-ICHIKA, ARE YOU WEALLY CUTTING IT?
TOKYO

SNIP
?!

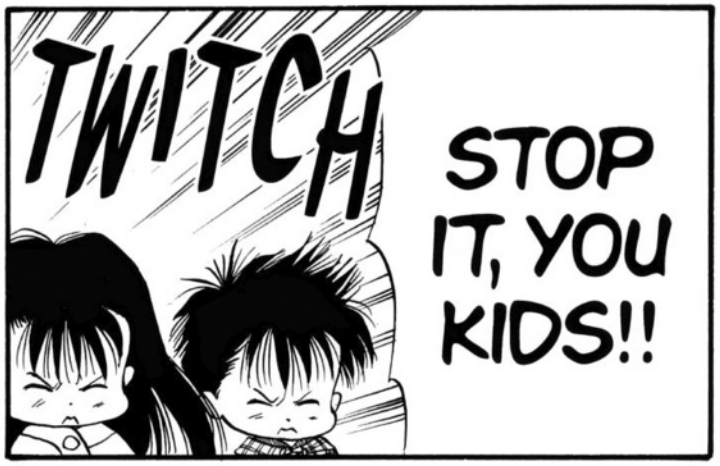
...
IF YOU MOVE YOU'LL GET HURT.
WHUP
NO... NO...
TOKYO

NO! NO!
BWAAAAH


MINORU RECALLS HIS DARK PAST. (SEE VOLUME 2)


TA-DAH

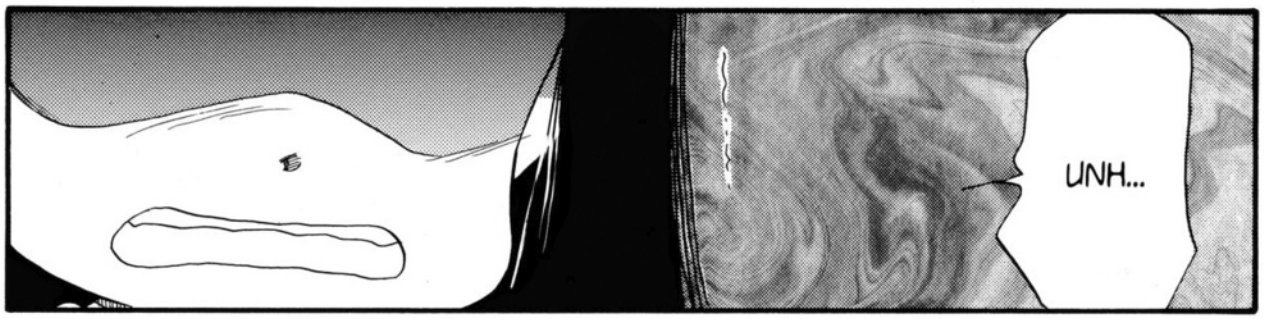
WE WERE PLAYING BARBER SHOP, AND MINORU SUDDENLY STARTED SCREAMING.
WHAT'S WRONG?
BWAZA...


TWITCH
STOP IT, YOU KIDS!!

BARBER SHOP?
HUH?

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO BE A BIG SISTER!!
YOU'RE THE WORST!!
ESPE-CIALLY YOU, ICHIKA.

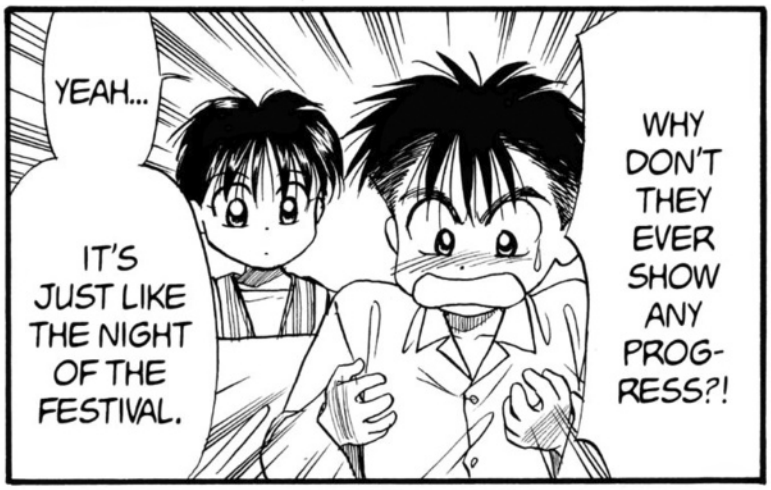
WHY DO YOU KEEP CAUSING TROUBLE?!
BE QUIET FOR A WHILE!!
GLOOM..


UNH...

WHY DO YOU ...
... ALWAYS YELL AT ME?!

AND SHE'S TAKING MA-BO AND MINORU WITH HER!!
I'M RUN-NING AWAY!
TUMP
HUH?

AKIHIRO ...
I HATE YOU!!

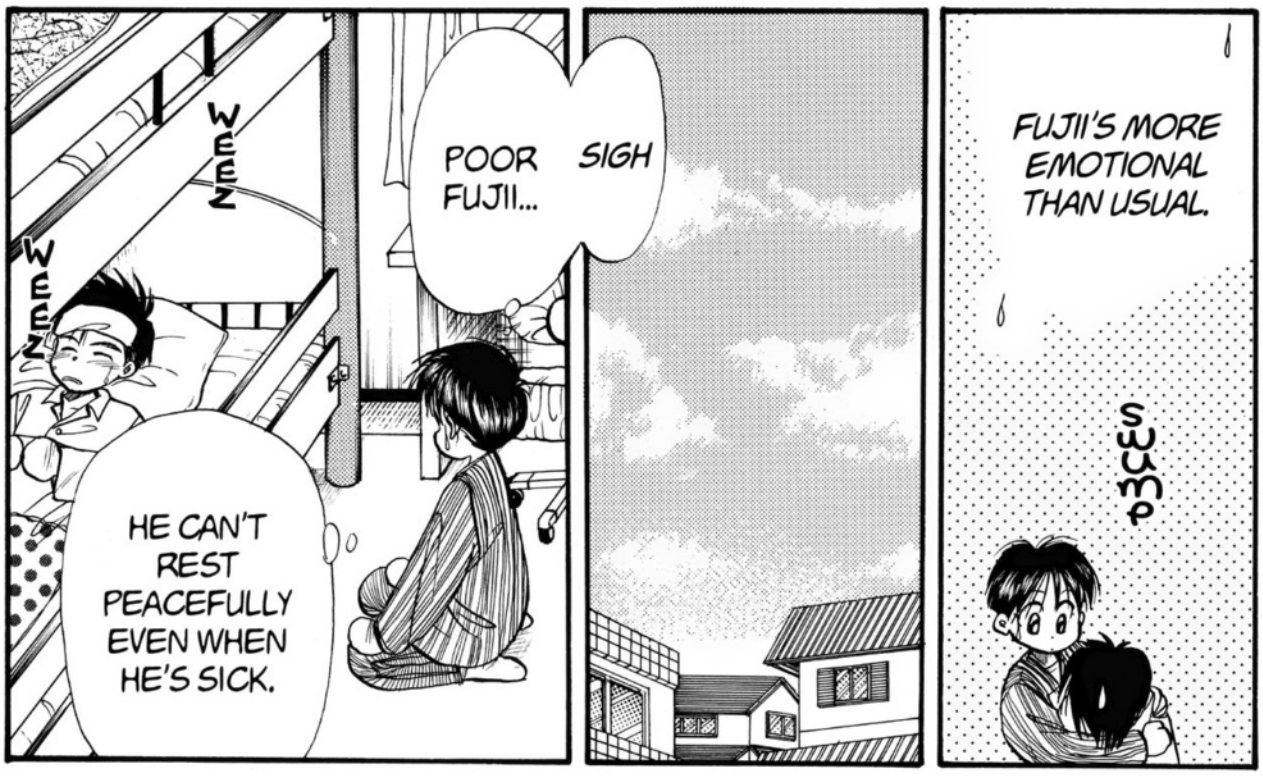

YEAH...
IT'S JUST LIKE THE NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL.
WHY DON'T THEY EVER SHOW ANY PROG-RESS?!

WHY...
WHAM

HE'S REALLY HOT...
WEEN
WEEN

FUJII?
THWUMP

THEY'RE JUST KIDS.
SHE ASKS, "WHY ME?" BUT SHE'S ALWAYS THE INSTIGATOR.


FUJII'S MORE EMOTIONAL THAN USUAL.
SWUMP
SIGH
POOR FUJII...
WEEN
WEEN
HE CAN'T REST PEACEFULLY EVEN WHEN HE'S SICK.

HUH ?
SLAP
SLAP
MINO-RU...

SIGH

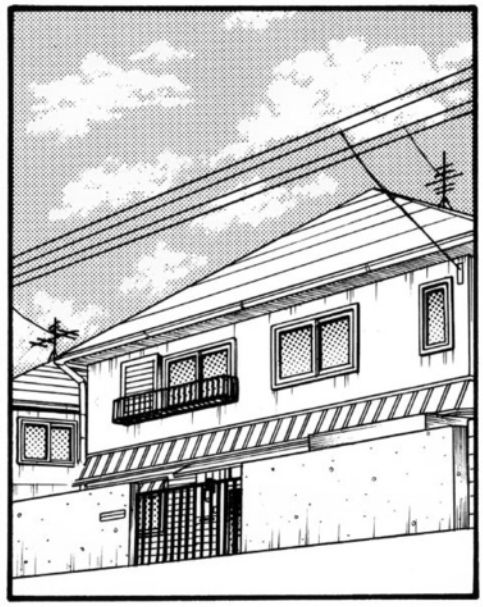
We're leaving.
Ichika
Ma-bo
Minoru

HUH?
We're leaving.
Ichika
Ma-bo
Minoru

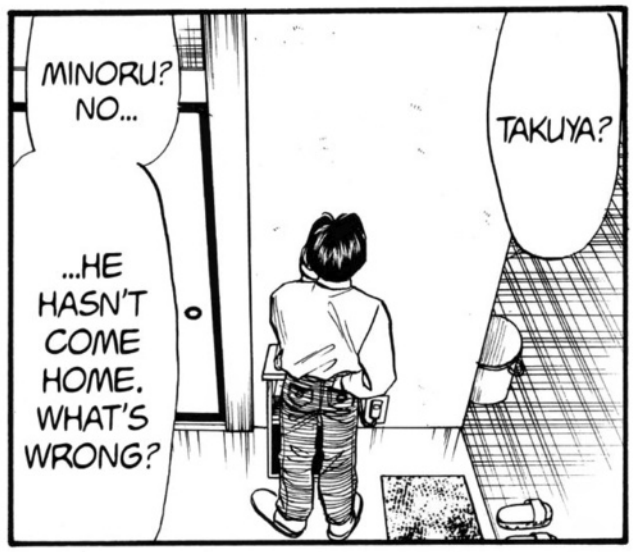
ICHIKA ?
MA-BO?
KLK
MINO-RU?

UH...
HELLO ?
COMING ...
KLAK

RRING
HUH?
RRING



MINORU AND FUJII'S LITTLE BROTHER AND SISTER...
WELL ...
...WENT SOMEWHERE AND I'M LOOKING FOR THEM.
WHAT ?


MINORU? NO...
TAKUYA?
...HE HASN'T COME HOME. WHAT'S WRONG?

HMM ...
WHERE COULD THEY HAVE GONE?
KLAK

ARE YOU SURE ?
WELL, IF THEY COME HERE, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
YES. ALL RIGHT.

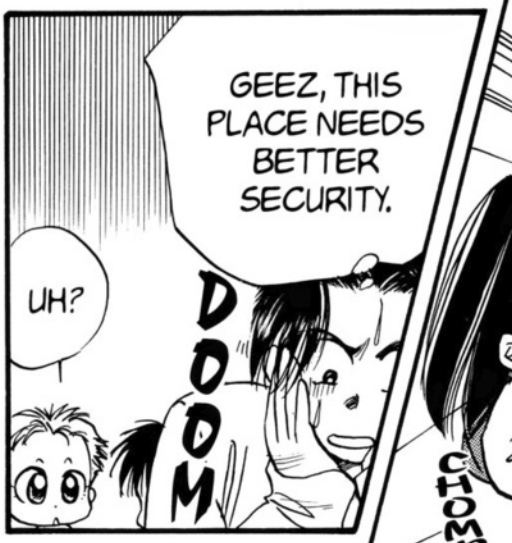
HAVE YOU CALLED THE POLICE?
THAT'S NOT GOOD.
NO. I DON'T THINK THAT'S NECES-SARY.

THAT'S MINE.
SHHH! GIVE IT TO ME. I'M OLDER THAN YOU ARE.

CREEP CREEP
WSP
WSP

HUH?
WSP
WSP

WH-WHAT THE...?! HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?!
My cake...


GEEZ, THIS PLACE NEEDS BETTER SECURITY.
UH?
DOOM

DOOM
AAH! DADDY!
WAAAH
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP

FUJII ...

FUJII ...

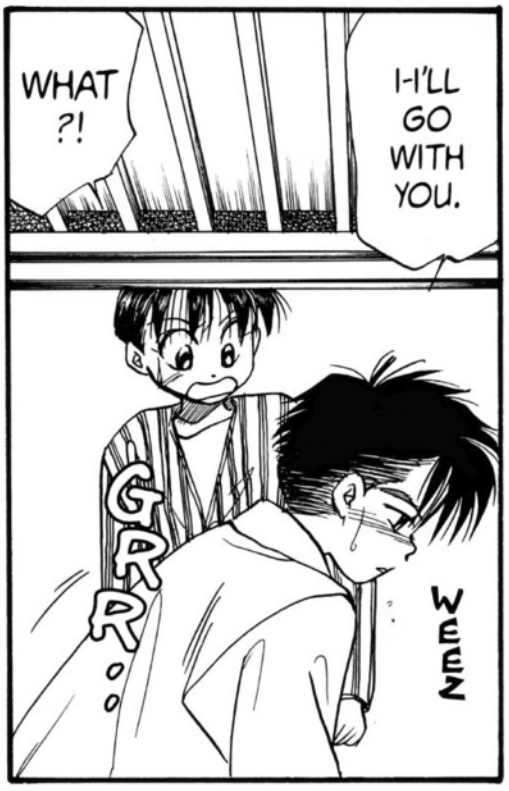
YEAH.
THEY'RE AT YOUR HOUSE?
Hot...

MY DAD JUST CALLED.
HUH ?
ICHIKA AND MA-BO ARE AT MY HOUSE. I'M GOING TO GET THEM.

HUH?
DANG...

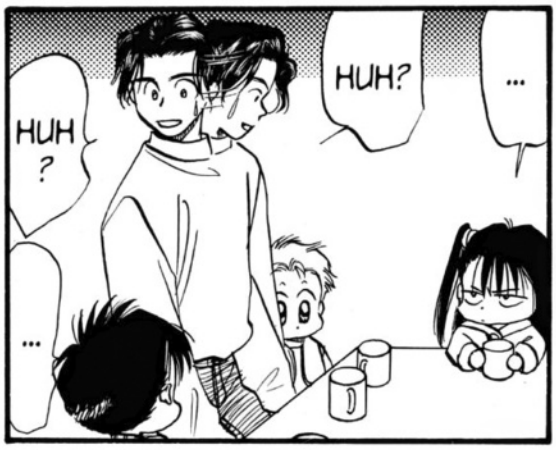
LISTEN ...
WEEN
THEY'RE MY RESPON-SIBILITY.
I CAN'T KEEP LETTING YOU DO EVERY-THING.

B-BUT YOU HAVE A FEVER AND YOU'RE GROGGY!
I'LL GO. YOU JUST REST.


WHAT ?!
I-I'LL GO WITH YOU.
GRR...
WEEN

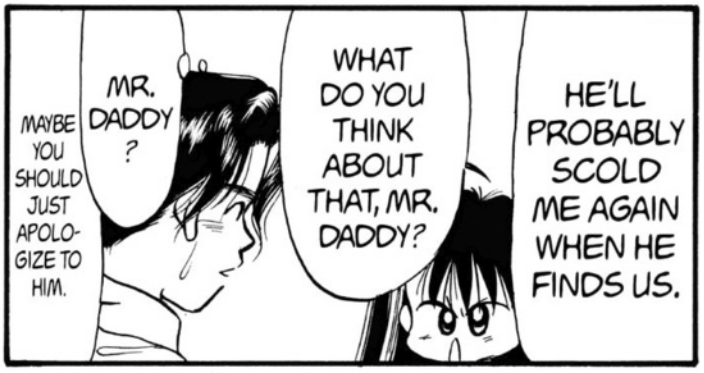
SIGH

UM... COULD YOU PASS ME THOSE JEANS?
NO, IT'S NOT.
IT'S OKAY, REALLY.


HUH?
...
HUH ?
...

YEAH. THEY'RE ALL GOING THWOUGH POOBERTY. THEY'RE EMOTIONALLY UNSTABLE.
HA... HA HA HA.
I TELL YOU, THE PEOPLE IN OUR FAMILY ARE ALWAYS YELLING.

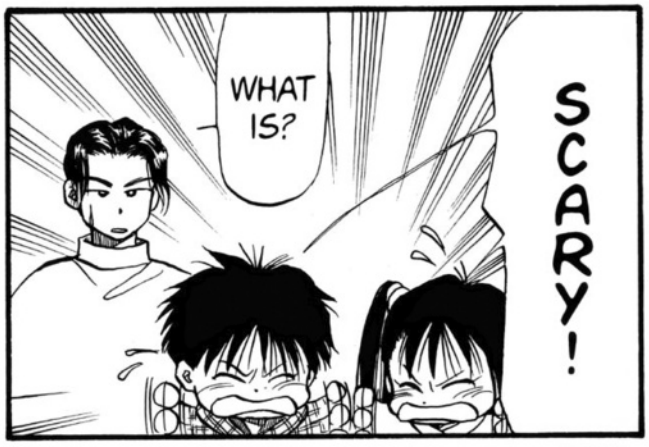
WE WERE HOPING FOR SOME-FING...
...A BIT MORE CON-STWUC-TIVE.
IT'S CLEAR THAT WE CAN'T TURN TO YOU FOR ADVICE.
SHUNK
HUFF
HUFF

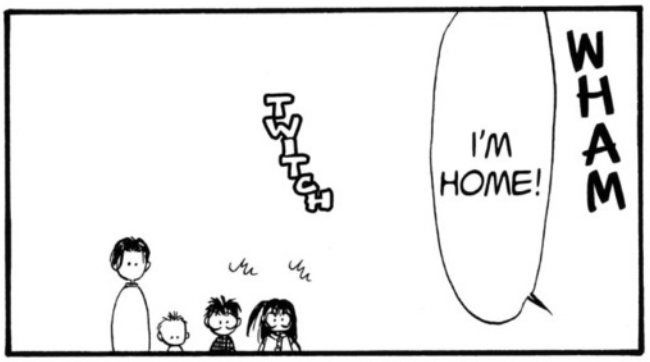

MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST APOLO-GIZE TO HIM.
MR. DADDY ?
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT, MR. DADDY?
HE'LL PROBABLY SCOLD ME AGAIN WHEN HE FINDS US.

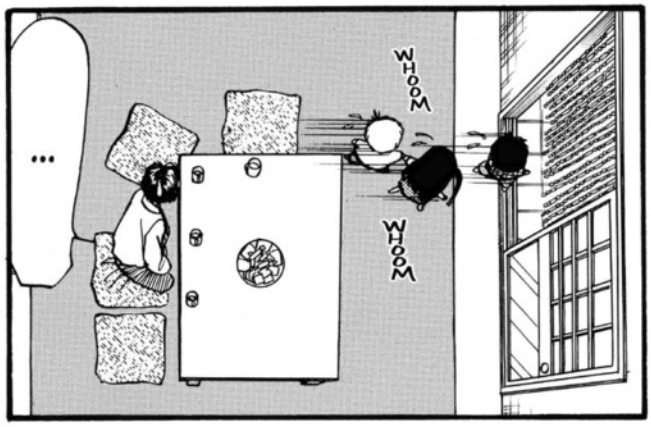
YEAH, AND WE'LL PWOBABLY GET AN AWFUL SCOLDING FROM AKIHIWO.
SOB
SOB

YOU'RE LUCKY, MINO-RU...
WHEN YOUR BROTHER FINDS YOU, I BET HE'LL GIVE YOU A HUG.

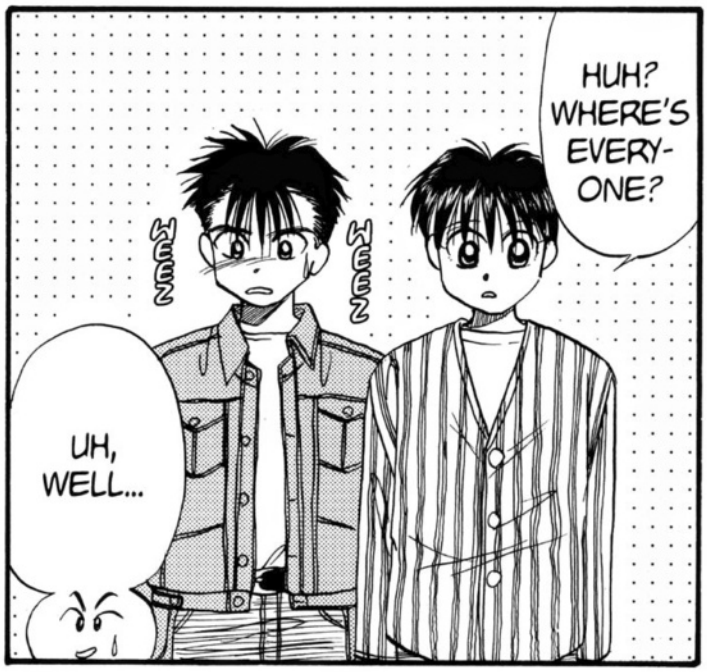
UH?
STARE


WHAT IS?
SCARY!

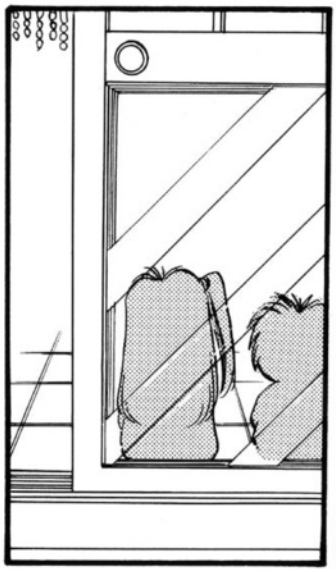

I'M HOME!
WHAM
TWITCH


...
WHOOM
WHOOM

ICHIKA AND MA-BO'S IMAGININGS
C'mon, get real. Why waste your energy on that useless junk?
heh heh heh
You're gonna have to pay for that.
Blue skies and white clouds... Those are what fill the pages of youth.
Ha ha ha... There's nothing like sports. Don't worry, if you try hard, someday you'll be rewarded!!
BLISSFULLY CLUELESS.
?


HUH? WHERE'S EVERY-ONE?
WEEZ
WEEZ
UH, WELL...

STOP CALLING ME "MR. DADDY."
YOU MUSTN'T TELL HIM THAT WE'RE HERE.
MR. DADDY ...



HUH?
I'M A CLAM.

MA-BO...
ICHI-KA...

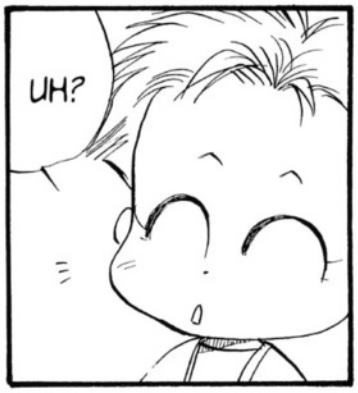
YOU CALL THAT HIDING?
...

...

WE'RE GOING HOME.
COME OUT HERE RIGHT NOW.
DOOM
HE'S GOING TO SCOLD US.
B-BUT ...
...
WAIT!
HEY ...
BUT ...
OH...
KLAK
OH ...
OKAY.
WELL, ENOKI, I GUESS I'LL BE GOING HOME.
SEE YOU.

WAIT ...
BUT ...
AKI-HIRO ...
... ALWAYS YELLS...

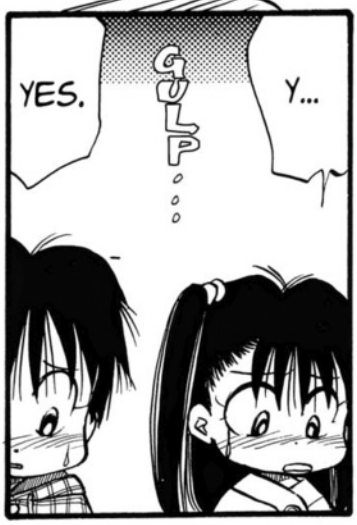
MINO-RU.


UH?

BWAZA.♡
PIT
PAT

PWEASE DON'T SPANK MINOWU.
IT WAS OUR FAULT.
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS...
...GO ALONG WITH OTHER PEOPLE WITHOUT THINKING ?!
WHAK
DON'T "HUH" ME!!
HUH?
WHAK
OOF!!
AP

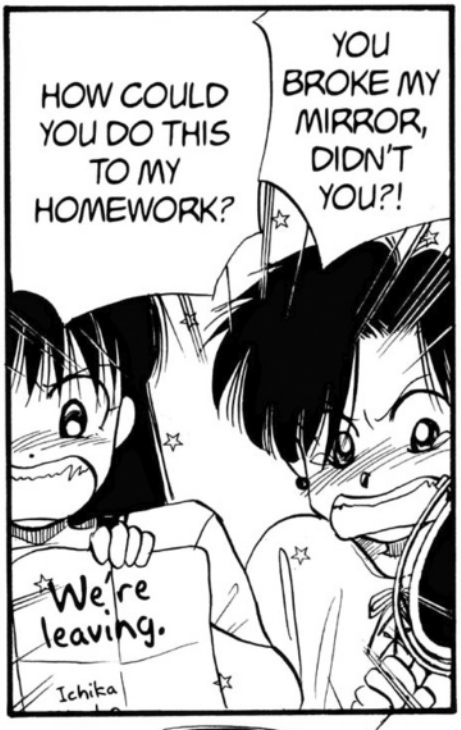
...


YES.
GULP...
Y...

YES?
ICHIKA...
DOOM
MA-BO ...

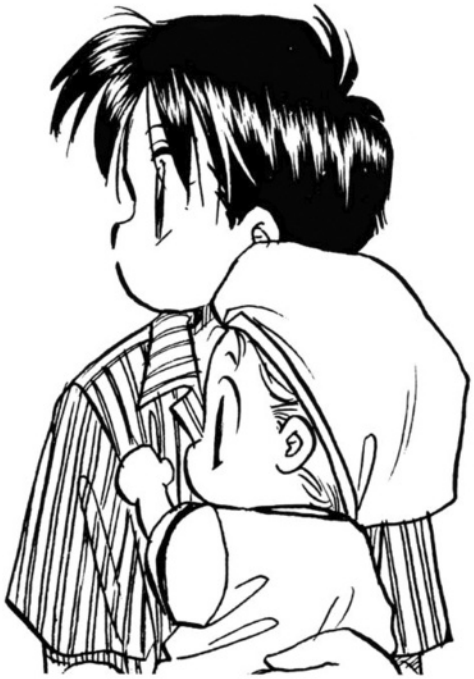
PFFT
DAD?
HA HA HA HA
MWAH

BUT NOW YOU'RE GOING TO SETTLE DOWN AND BE QUIET!!
YOUR BIG BROTHER IS SICK...
THOOM
...AND ALL YOU'VE DONE IS CAUSE HIM GRIEF.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND ?!



Chapter 55 / The End

BABY & Me
Chapter 56
Baby and Me
BASEBALL TEAM
AKATSUKI

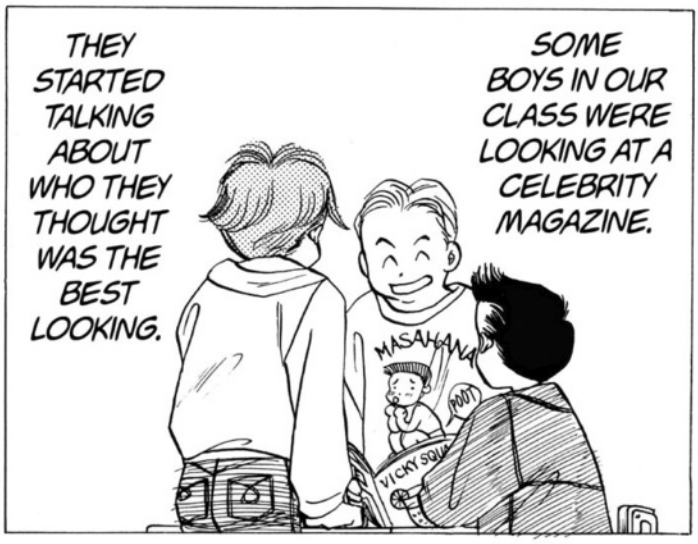


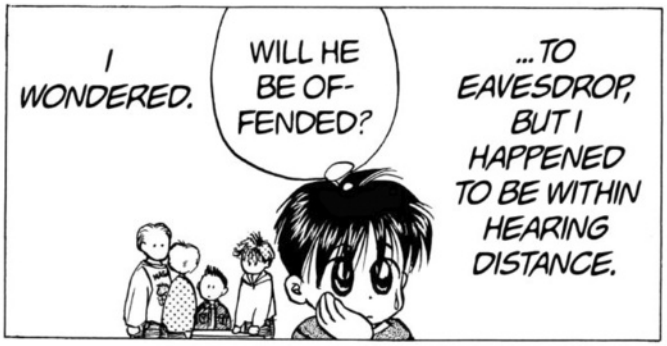
MY CLASSMATE NANAMI TAKENAKA...

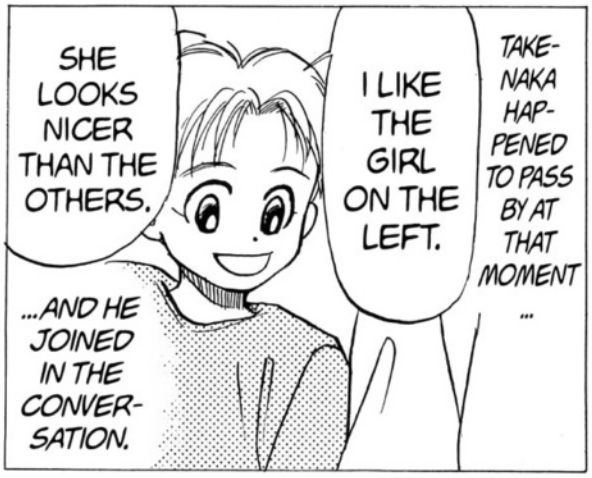
HE SEEMS TO WORRY THAT HE'S NOT MANLY ENOUGH.

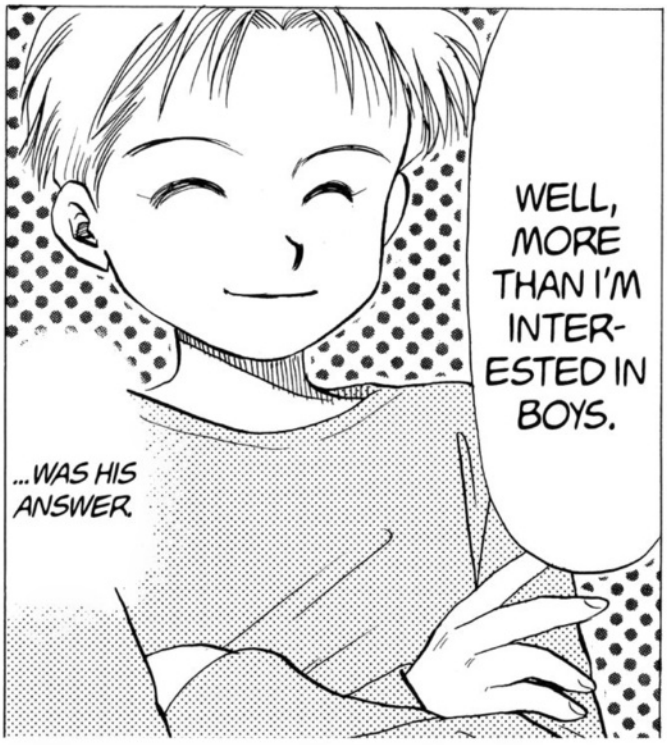
...IS A VERY CALM AND QUIET BOY.

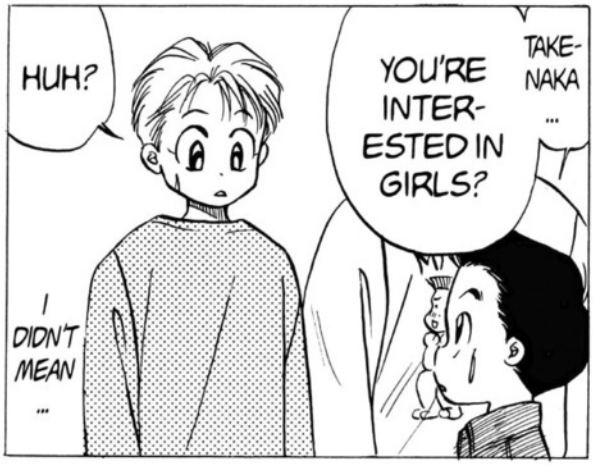
IN FACT, JUST THE OTHER DAY...

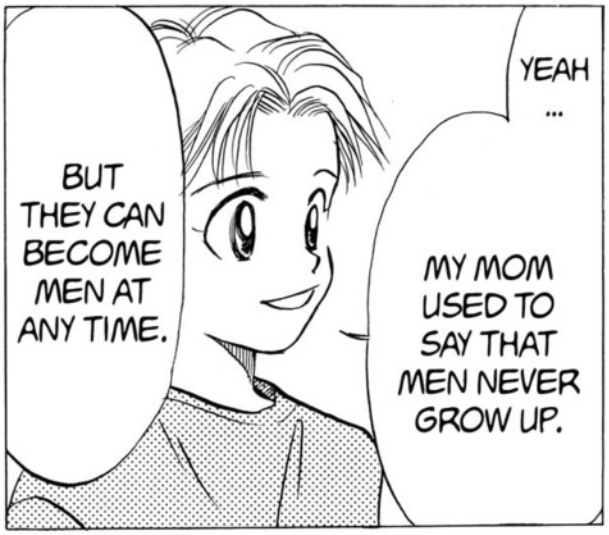


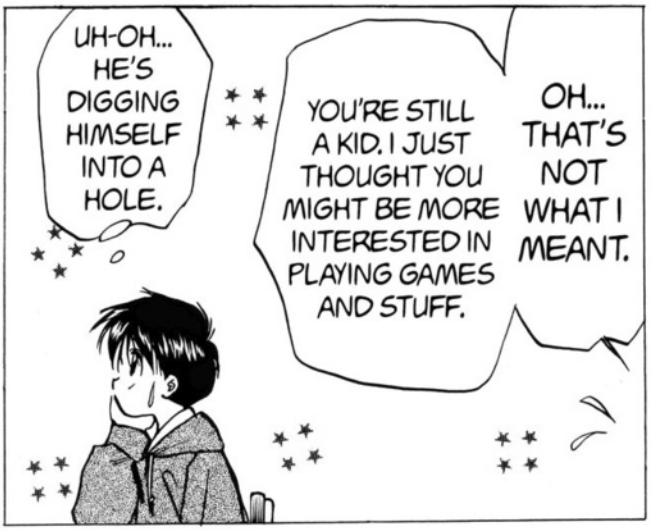








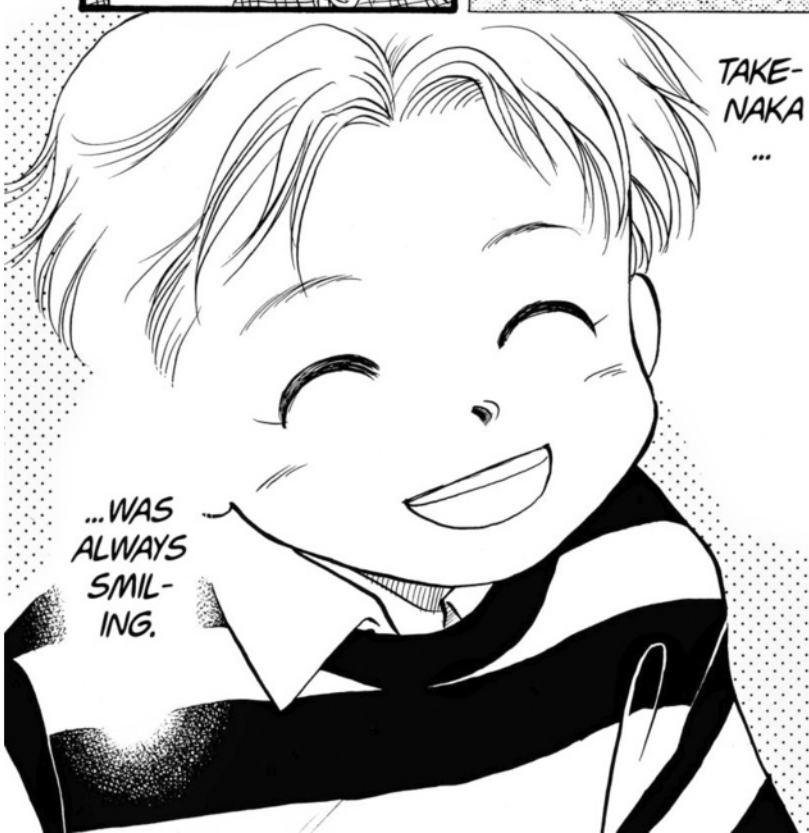

YEAH ...
MY MOM USED TO SAY THAT MEN NEVER GROW UP.
BUT THEY CAN BECOME MEN AT ANY TIME.


UH-OH... HE'S DIGGING HIMSELF INTO A HOLE.
YOU'RE STILL A KID. I JUST THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE MORE INTERESTED IN PLAYING GAMES AND STUFF.
OH... THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

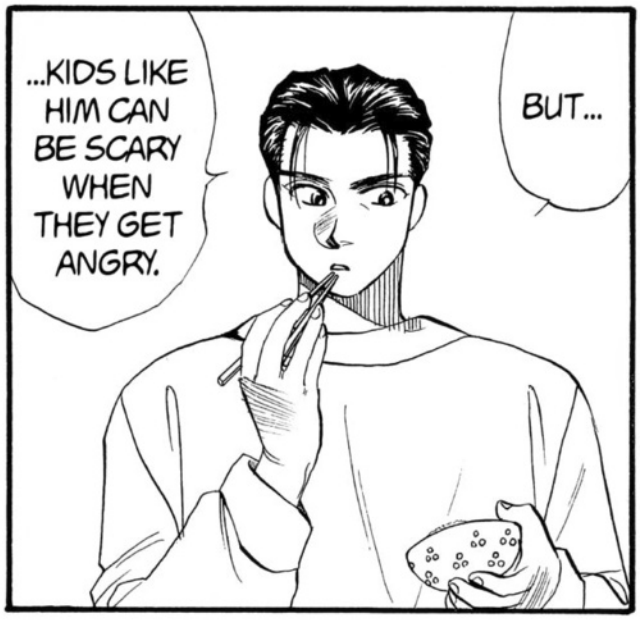
ALL DONE.
THERE.
SWEEN

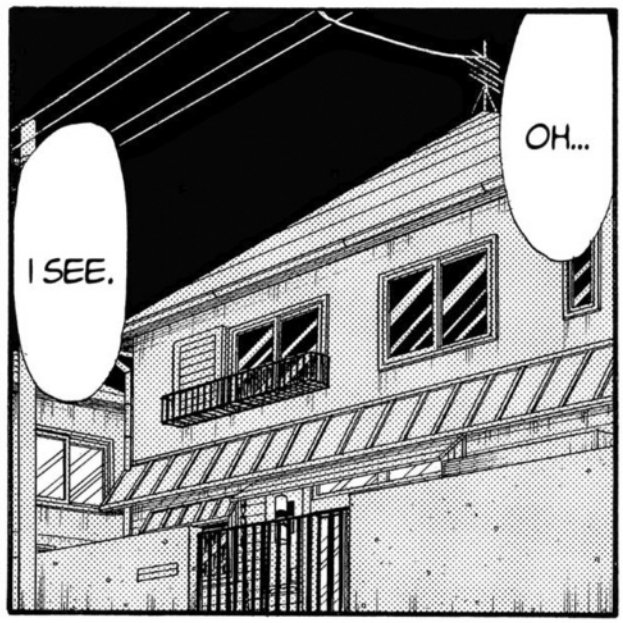
...I THOUGHT TAKE-NAKA...
...MIGHT REALLY BE A COOL PERSON.

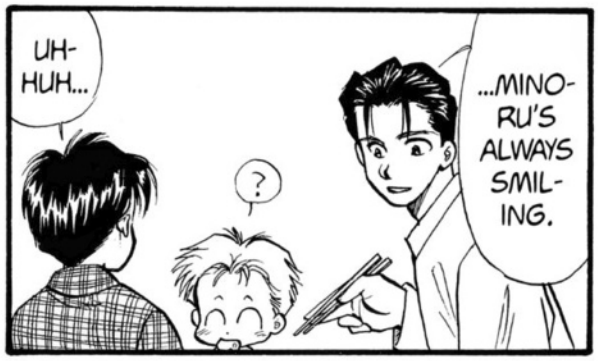
THAT'S WHEN ...
...


TAKE-NAKA ...
...WAS ALWAYS SMIL-ING.

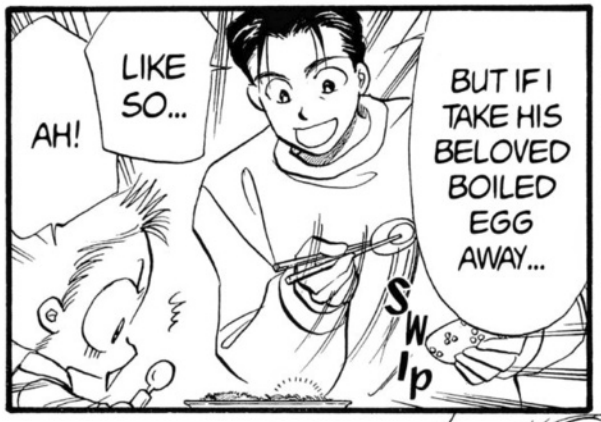
HEY, IT TURNED OUT WELL. IT'S NOT PULLING.
THANKS.
STOP PRAISING YOUR-SELF, WILL YOU?

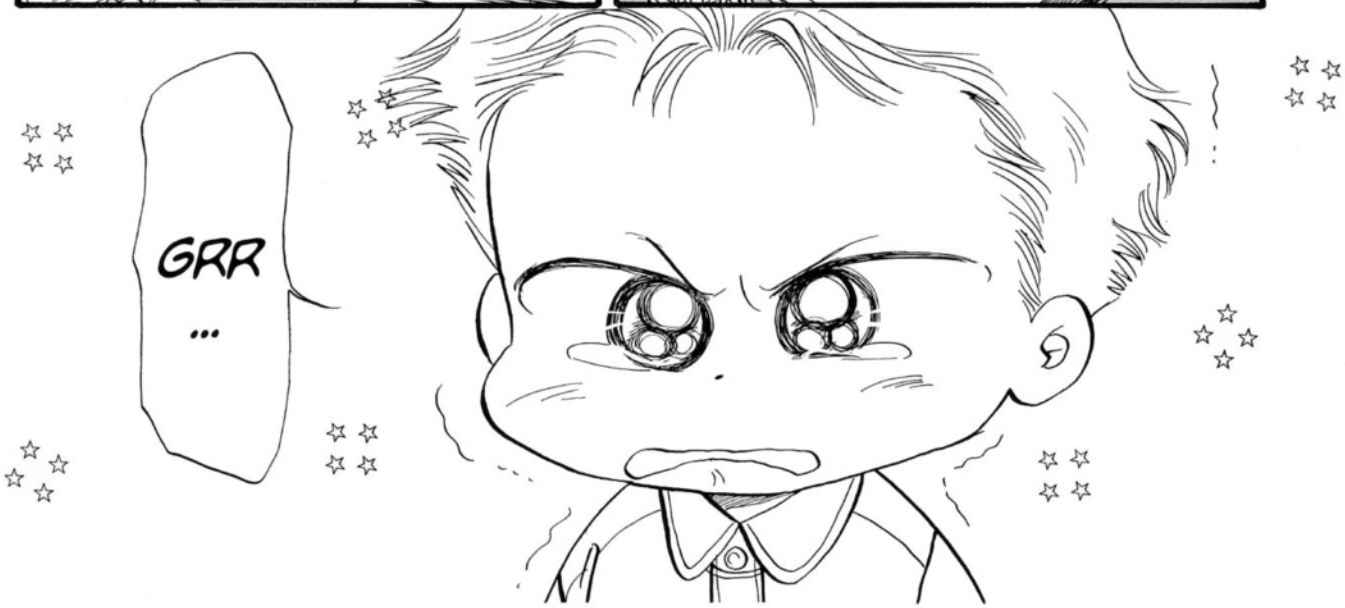

...KIDS LIKE HIM CAN BE SCARY WHEN THEY GET ANGRY.
BUT...

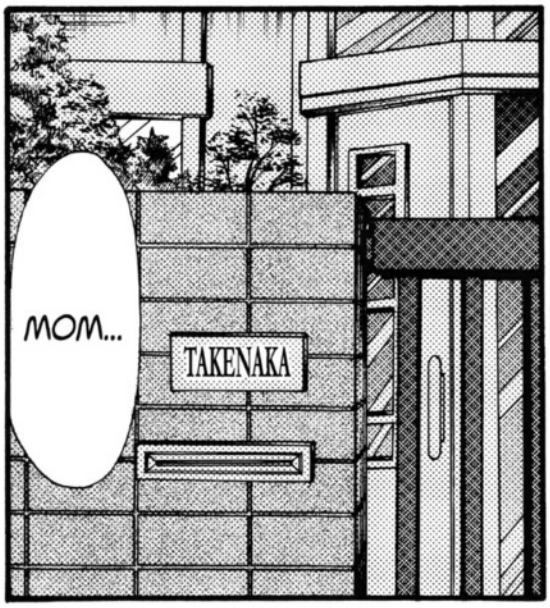

OH...
I SEE.


UH-HUH...
?
...MINORU'S ALWAYS SMILING.

WELL, FOR EXAMPLE ...
TAKUYA'S LIKE THAT.
WHY ?
OH? YOU THINK SO?
I JUST HAVE A FEELING.
OH ...♪
OH ...♪

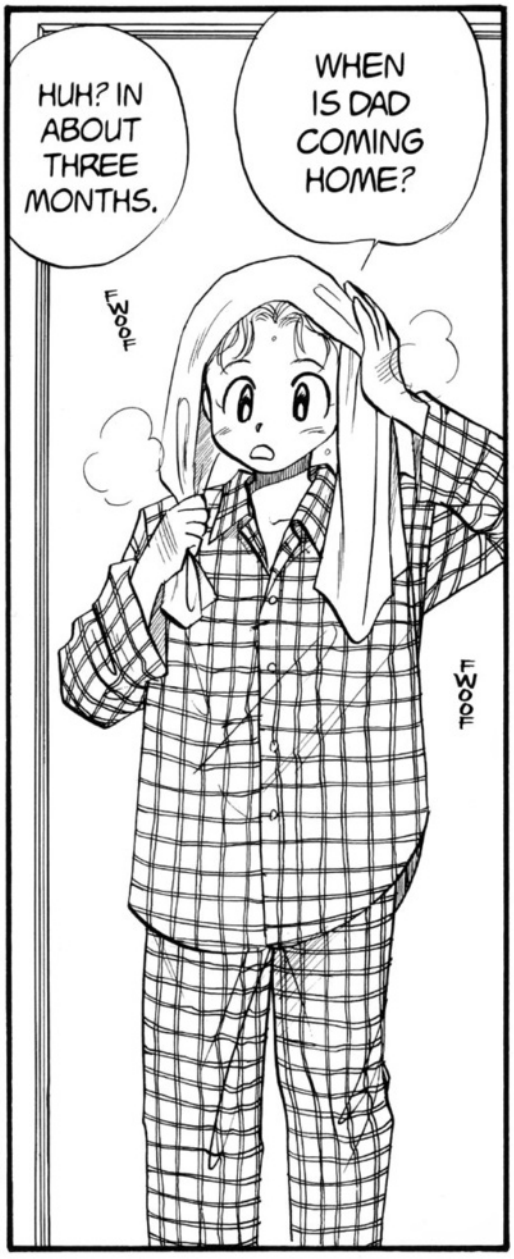

AH!
LIKE SO...
BUT IF I TAKE HIS BELOVED BOILED EGG AWAY...
SWIP


GRR ...

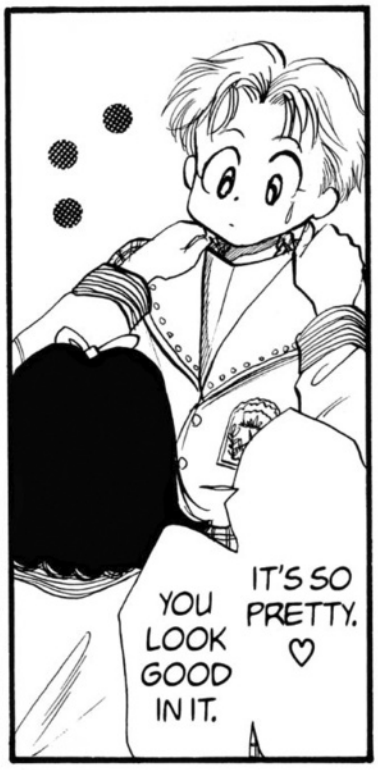

MOM...
TAKENAKA

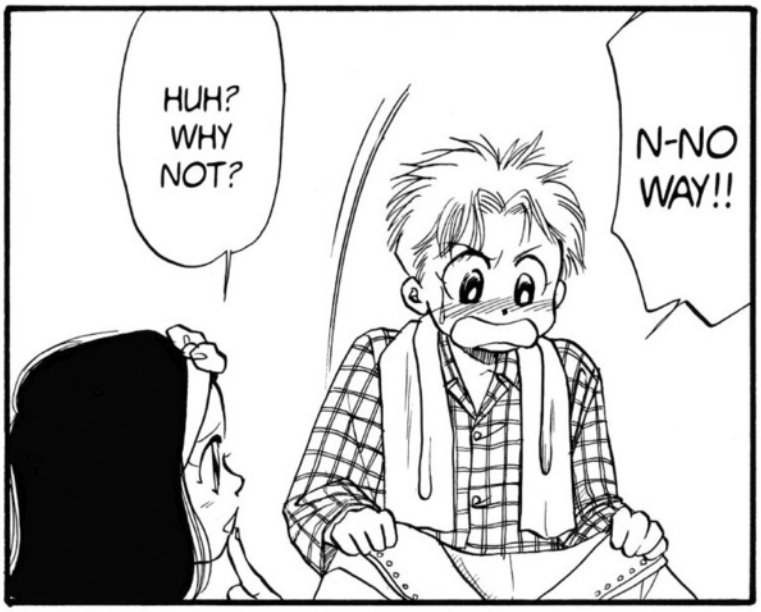
HE LOOKS WEIRD.
SEE? SCARY, RIGHT?
GRR ...
SHAKE
SHAKE

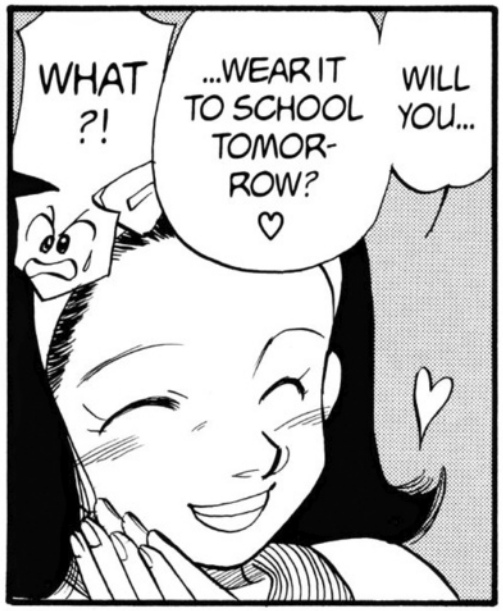
TRY THIS ON.
NANAMI ...
Hmph.
I'LL NEVER BECOME A SEAMAN!!
BLUP BLUP


HUH? IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS.
WHEN IS DAD COMING HOME?
EWOOF
EWOOF

WHAT ?
IT'S PRETTY.
VERY PRETTY.
IT LOOKS LIKE SOME-THING FOR A GIRL.


YOU LOOK GOOD IN IT.
IT'S SO PRETTY. ♡


HUH? WHY NOT?
N-NO WAY!!


WHAT ?!
...WEAR IT TO SCHOOL TOMOR-ROW? ♡
WILL YOU...

IS THIS A REBEL-LIOUS PHASE?

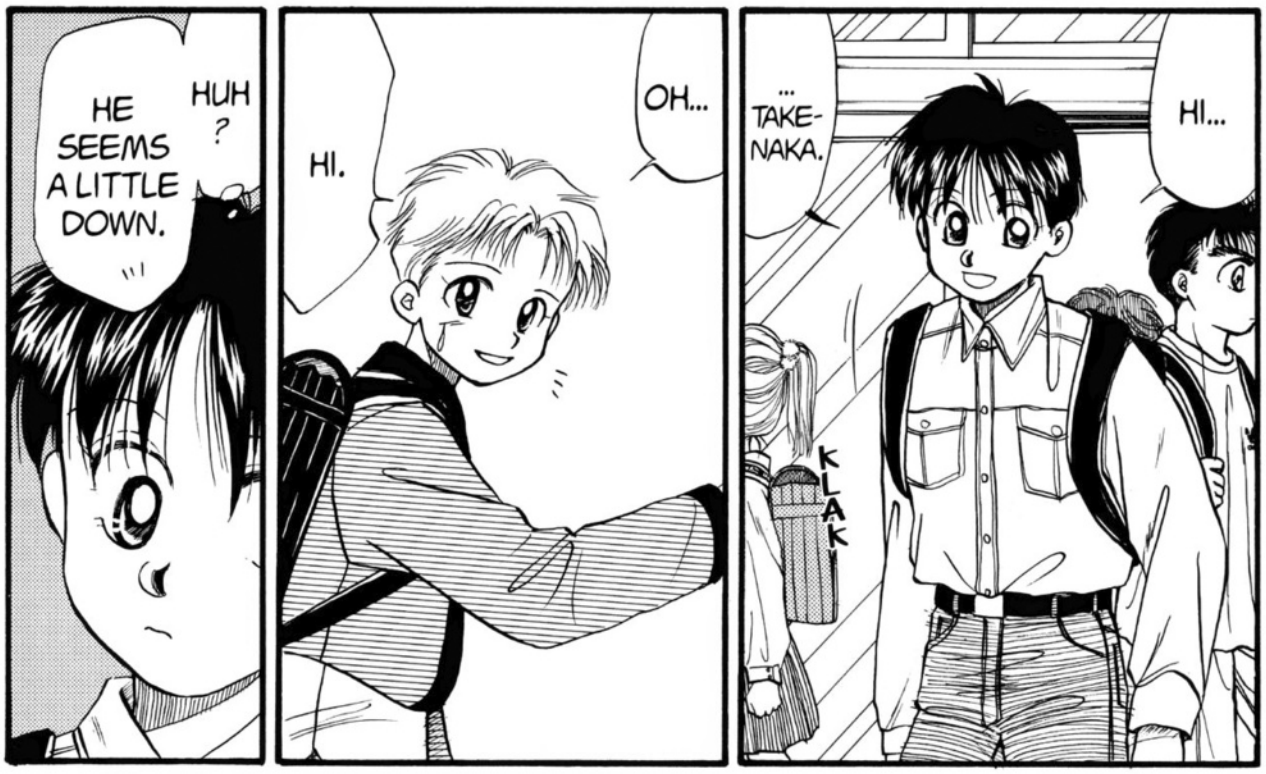
GOOD NIGHT.
I'M GOING TO BED.
SHHHK

YOU WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND, MOM.

...ABOUT MY VOICE CHANG-ING.
...A LOT OF THINGS LIKE...

I WANT TO ASK DAD...
SIGH

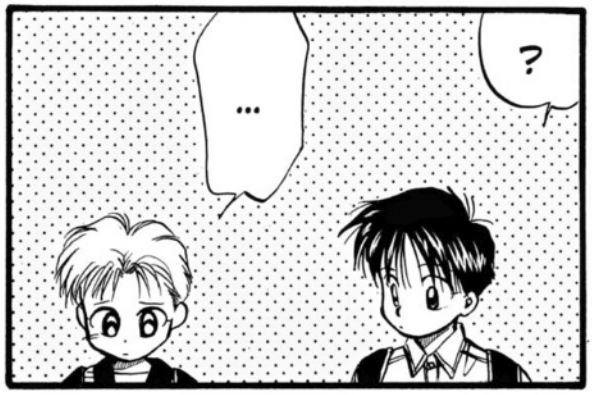
BLINK
I WONDER WHEN...
...IT HAP-PENED TO HIM...
BLINK
ZZZ...
CHEEP
CHEEP
CHEEP
CHEEP
CHEEP
CHUWA
HUH?
WUZZ
WUZZ


HI...
... TAKE-NAKA.
KLAK

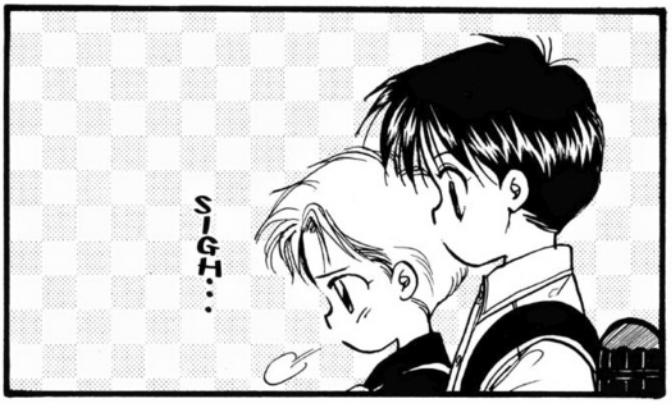
OH...
HI.

HUH ?
HE SEEMS A LITTLE DOWN.

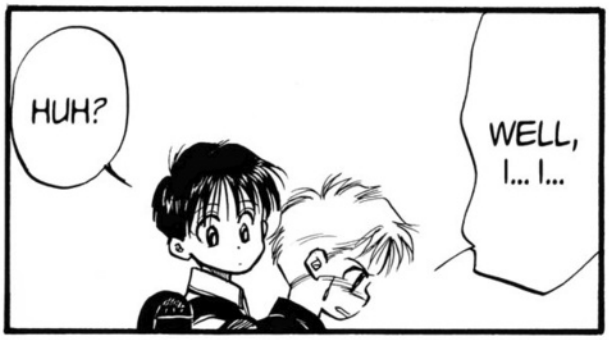
SOME-THING WRONG, TAKE-NAKA?
WUZZ
HUH?! WHY?
I'M FINE.
WUZZ
OKAY, THEN...


?
...

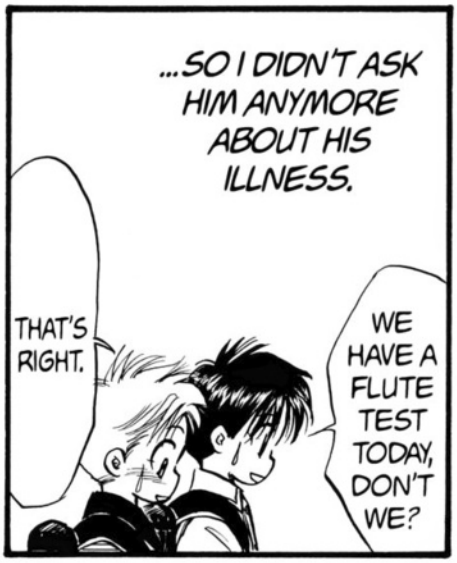
UM... YOU KNOW, ENOKI ...
WUZZ
YEAH?
WUZZ


SIGH...

OH...


HUH?
WELL, I... I...

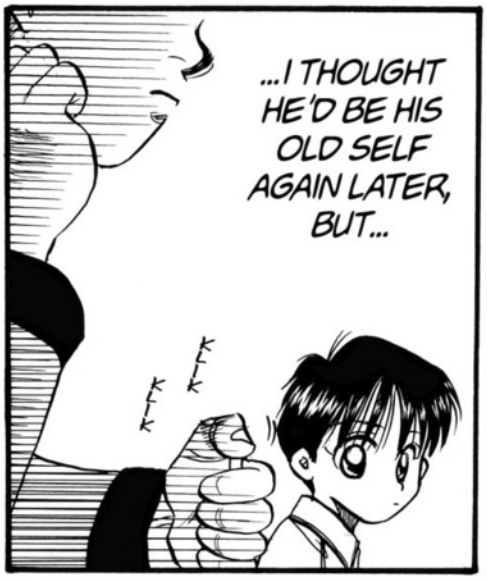
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT ?!
I MAY BE... SICK.


...SO I DIDN'T ASK HIM ANYMORE ABOUT HIS ILLNESS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
WE HAVE A FLUTE TEST TODAY, DON'T WE?

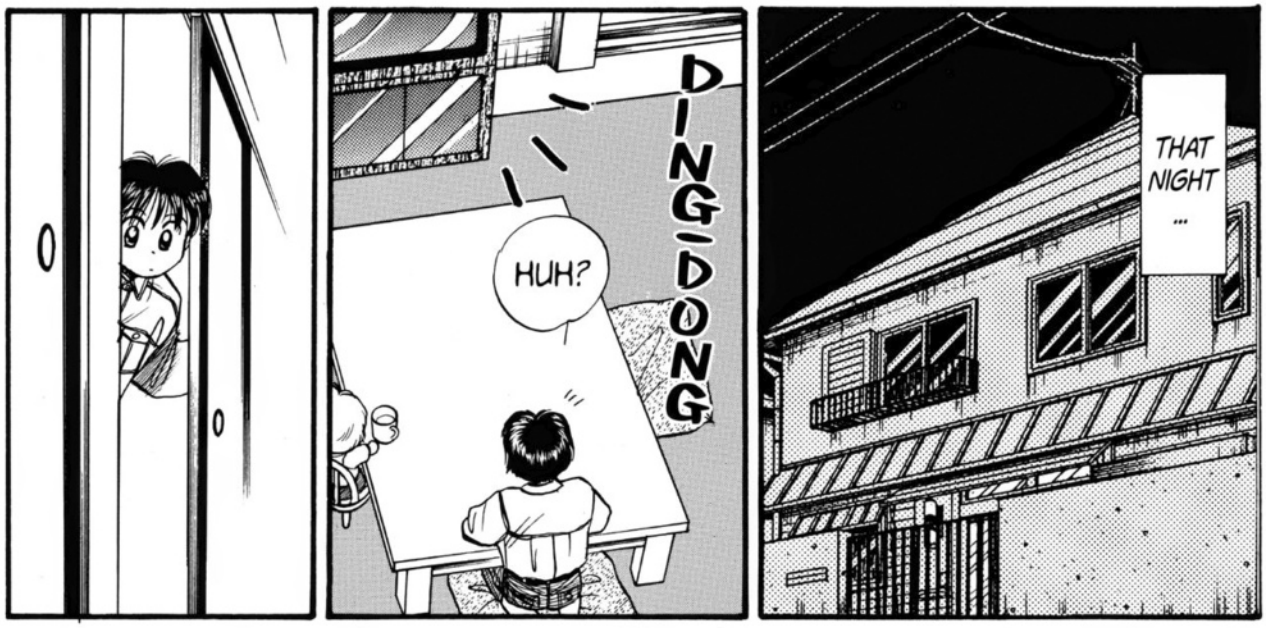
HE DIDN'T SEEM TO WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT...

N-NEVER MIND.
SHEEZ
FORGET IT.
...

...HE SEEMED EVEN MORE DE-PRESSED AFTER LUNCH.
KLIK
KLIK


...I THOUGHT HE'D BE HIS OLD SELF AGAIN LATER, BUT...
KLIK
KLIK

AFTER THAT...

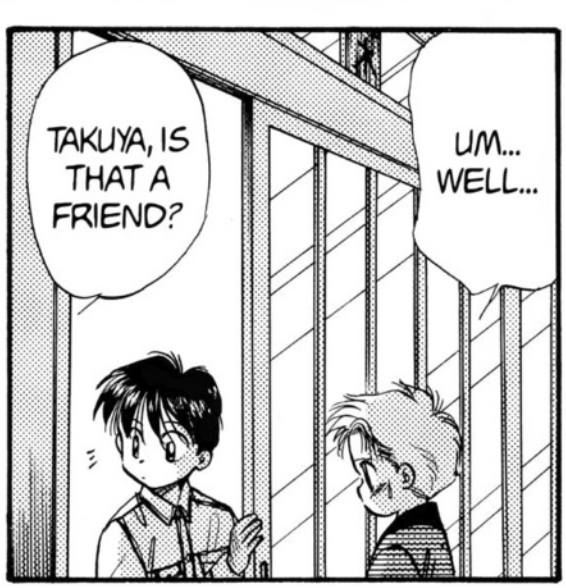

THAT NIGHT ...

DING-DONG
HUH?

IS THAT YOU, ENOKI ?
IT'S ME, TAKE-NAKA.
HUH?

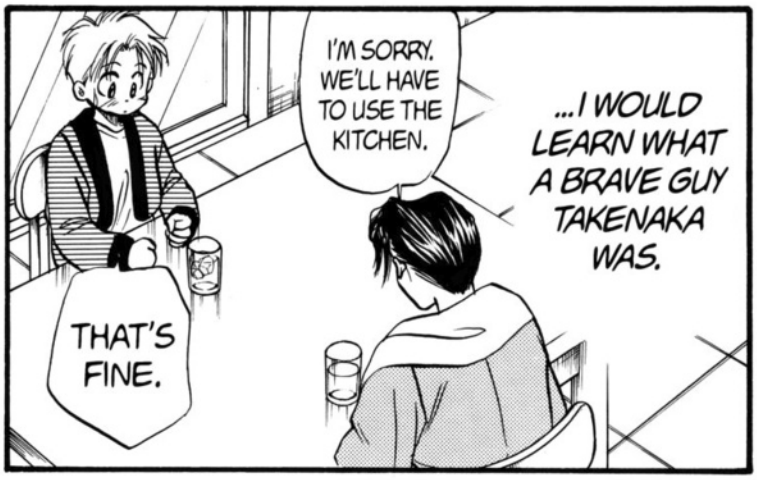
WHO IS IT?
UH...

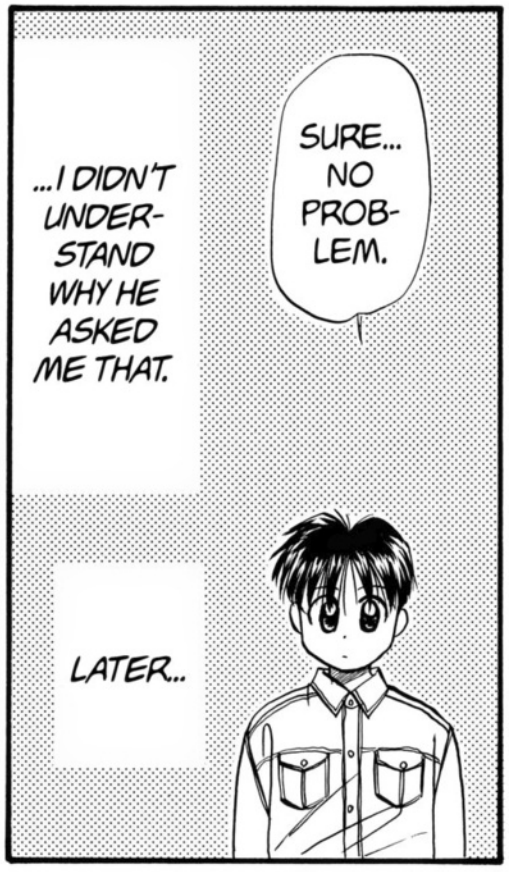
WHO COULD IT BE?

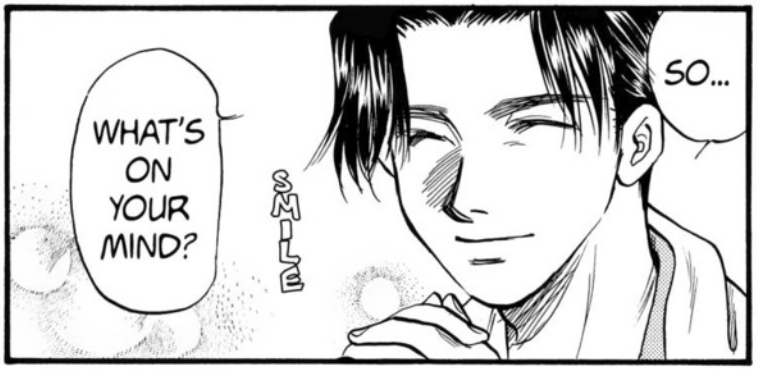

UM... WELL...
TAKUYA, IS THAT A FRIEND?

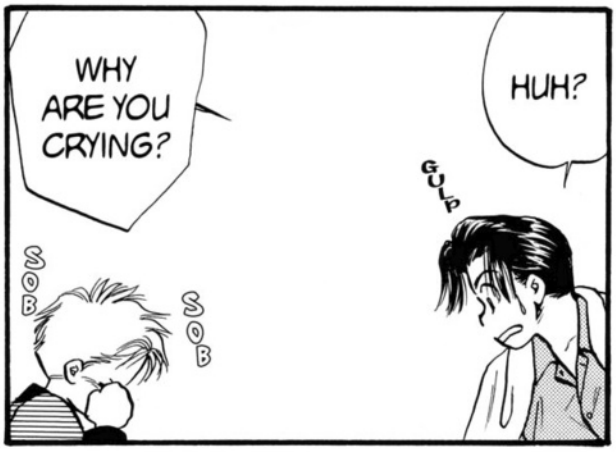
TAKE-NAKA?
KLAK...
IT'S LATE. WHAT'S GOING ON?

ASK HIM TO COME IN.
I...I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO YOUR FATHER.
YEAH?
ENOKI ...
?
...
COME IN, TAKENAKA.
OKAY.
AT THAT MOMENT ...
IS IT ALL RIGHT ?

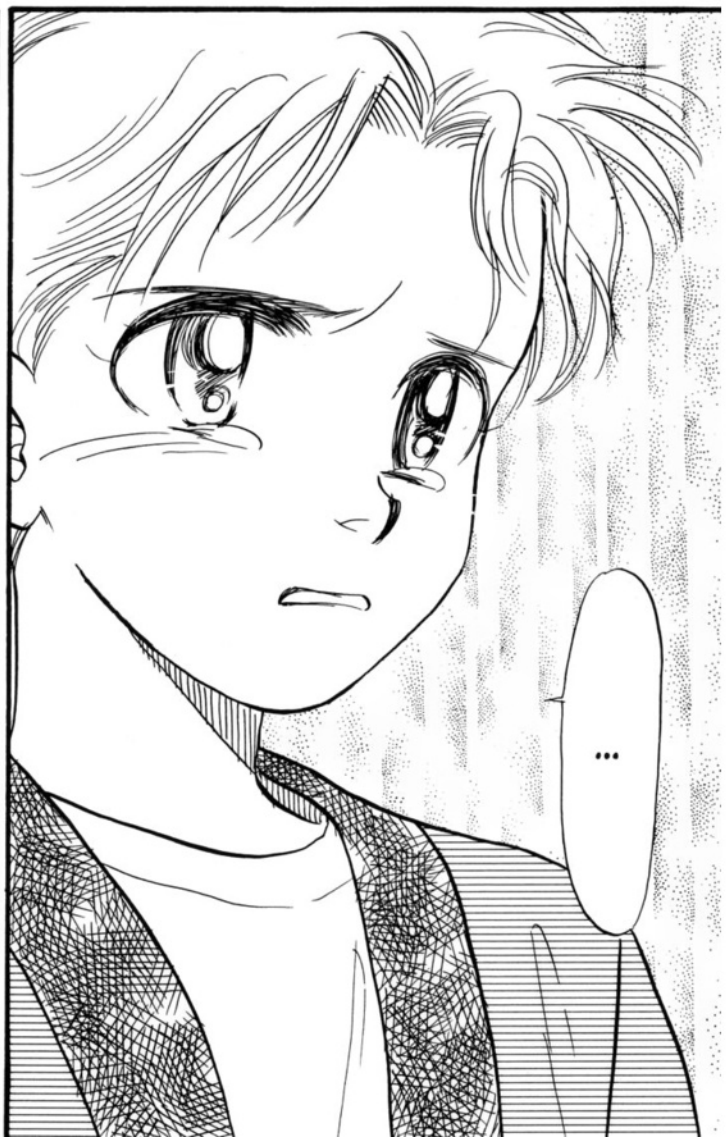

I'M SORRY. WE'LL HAVE TO USE THE KITCHEN.
...I WOULD LEARN WHAT A BRAVE GUY TAKENAKA WAS.
THAT'S FINE.


SURE... NO PROB-LEM.
...I DIDN'T UNDER-STAND WHY HE ASKED ME THAT.
LATER..


SO...
SMILE
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?


HUH?
GULP
WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
SOB
SOB

P-PLEASE DON'T TELL TAKUYA ...
SOB
SOB
...WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU.


...

Author's Note: Part 6

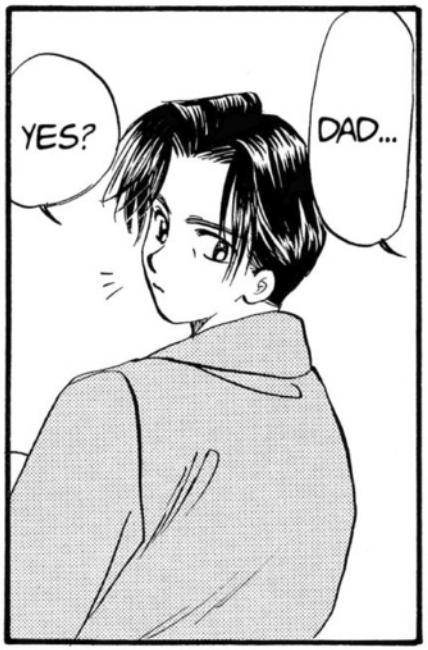
Hi. This is the last author's note for this volume. In this chapter, Takenaka talks to Takuya's dad about a wet dream he had. Takuya's father tells him, "It is a normal physiological phenomenon." But let me say this for the sake of the little boys who are reading this--some boys never have them. So don't think you're weird if you don't.

I got a lot of flak when I started drawing this chapter, but I stuck to my guns and did it. Now I'm glad I did.

I felt that the problems that girls face, like their budding breasts and menstrual cycles, are dealt with a lot in stories, but boys go through stages too--their voices change, they have wet dreams, and they get body hair as they mature. I was told that this subject would make girls turn away, but I don't think so. What do you think?

See you again in Volume 11! ♡ Goodbye, and thanks!!

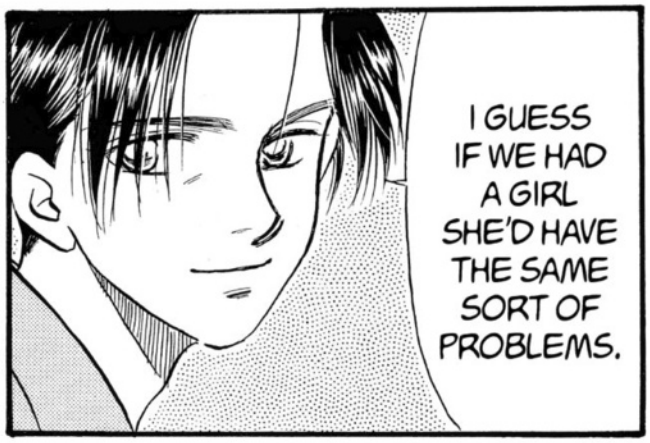
WHAT DID...
... TAKE-NAKA SAY?


DAD...
YES?

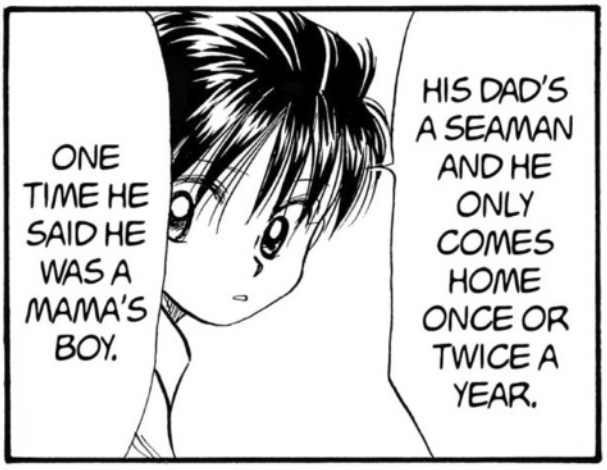
SHHHK
KLAK

HMM... I SEE. SO THAT'S IT.
WHAT ?

OH... THIS AND THAT.
Minoru, don't get on the bedding.
Wee ...
ISN'T HIS FATHER AT HOME?


I GUESS IF WE HAD A GIRL SHE'D HAVE THE SAME SORT OF PROBLEMS.

THAT DOESN'T ...
...TELL ME ANYTHING...

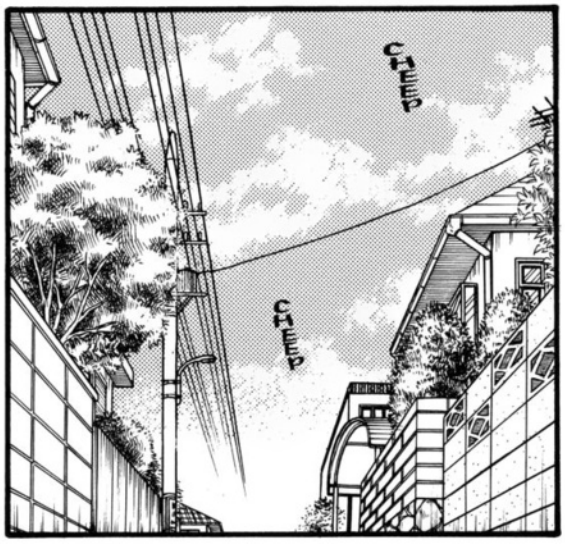

HIS DAD'S A SEAMAN AND HE ONLY COMES HOME ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR.
ONE TIME HE SAID HE WAS A MAMA'S BOY.

...TAKENAKA'S ALWAYS SMILING.
HE'S EASY-GOING.

WHAT'S WRONG?
OH... NOTHING. IT'S JUST A LITTLE STRANGE.
AFTER ALL...

HE WAS SO UPSET THAT HE CRIED.
WHAT?!

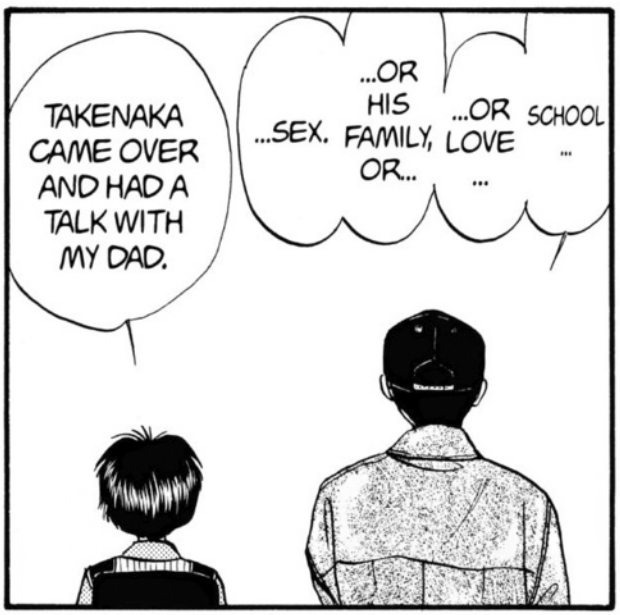
HEY, TAKUYA!
WHAT'S UP?


CHEEP
CHEEP

WHAT COULD A BOY MY AGE BE CRYING ABOUT?

SEIICHI...
HUH?

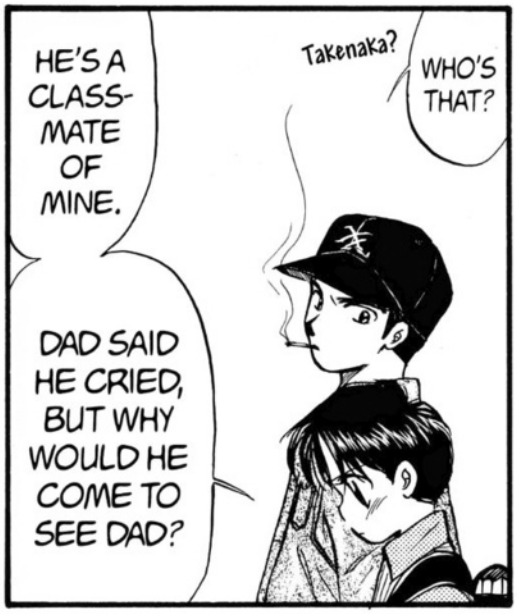
GOING TO WORK, SEIICHI?
THAT'S RIGHT. I TAKE MY JOB SERIOUSLY, YOU KNOW.
Well, I do.


TAKENAKA CAME OVER AND HAD A TALK WITH MY DAD.
...SEX.
...OR HIS FAMILY, OR...
...OR LOVE ...
SCHOOL ...

...LOTS OF THINGS, I GUESS.

WELL ...

AHA!
I GET IT.


HE'S A CLASS-MATE OF MINE.
Takenaka?
WHO'S THAT?
DAD SAID HE CRIED, BUT WHY WOULD HE COME TO SEE DAD?

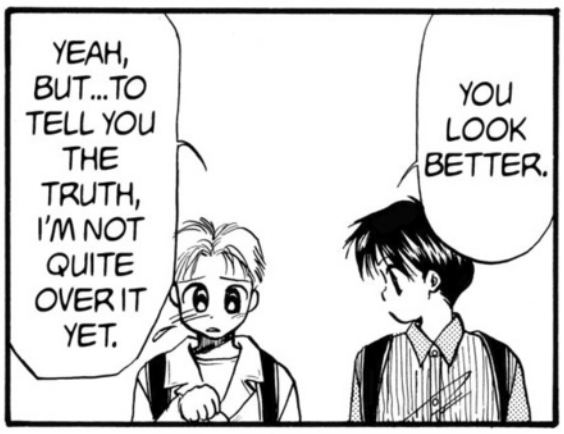
HEH HEH... HE'S YOUR DAD, AFTER ALL.
I AM NOT!!

JEALOUS?

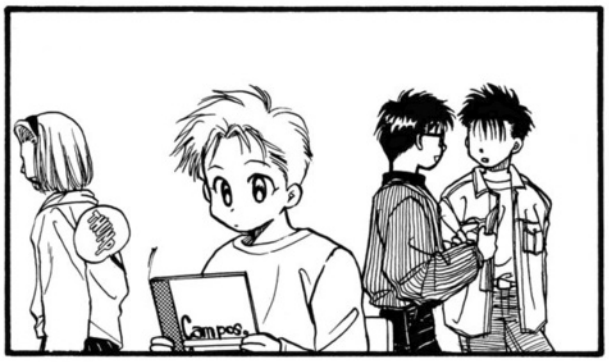
YOU'RE JEALOUS OF HIM. ♡
AW, THAT'S CUTE.
TONK
HUH?

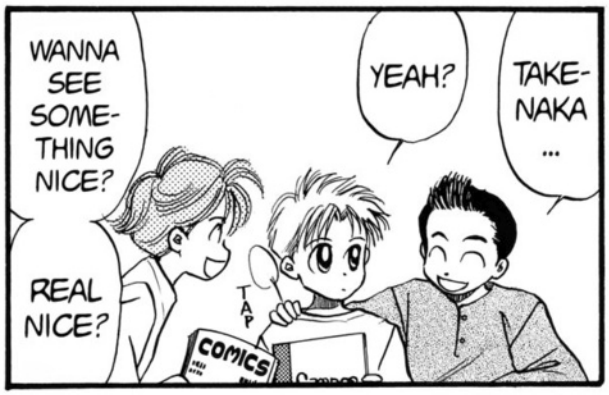
SORRY FOR SHOWING UP LIKE THAT LAST NIGHT.
HI.
ENOKI ...
WUNN
IT'S JUST THAT...
WUNN
...I DON'T LIKE IT THAT TAKENAKA AND DAD HAVE A SECRET.

IT HELPED A LOT TO TALK TO YOUR DAD.
IT'S ALL IN HOW YOU LOOK AT THINGS, I GUESS.
NOTH-ING.


YEAH, BUT...TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'M NOT QUITE OVER IT YET.
YOU LOOK BETTER.

HUH?!
WHAT'S WRONG ?


Campus

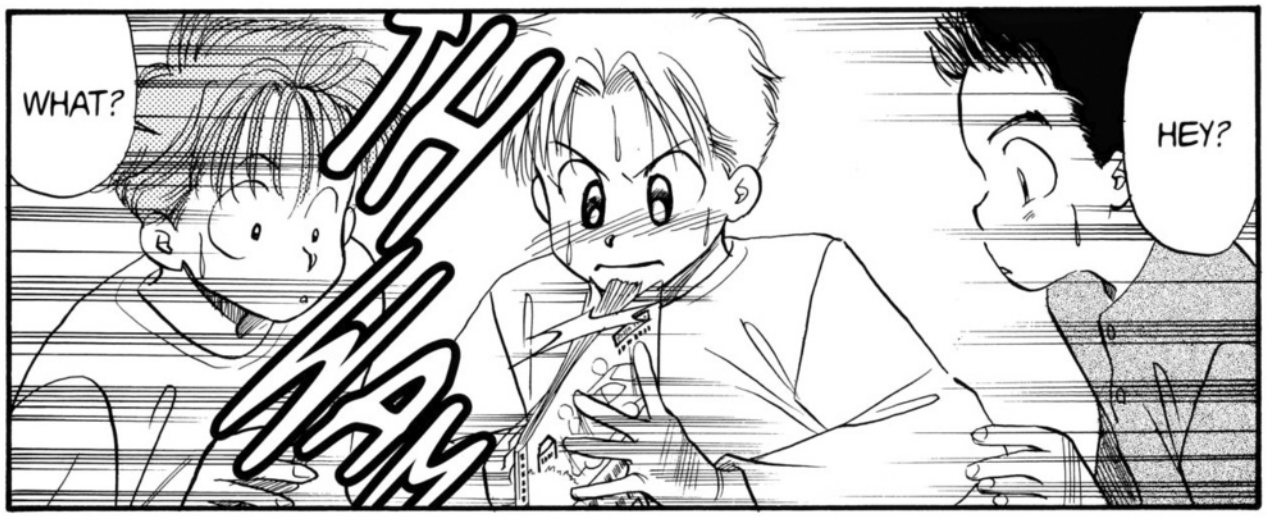

WANNA SEE SOME-THING NICE?
YEAH?
TAKE-NAKA ...
REAL NICE?
TAP
COMICS

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?

!!

HERE.
COMICS

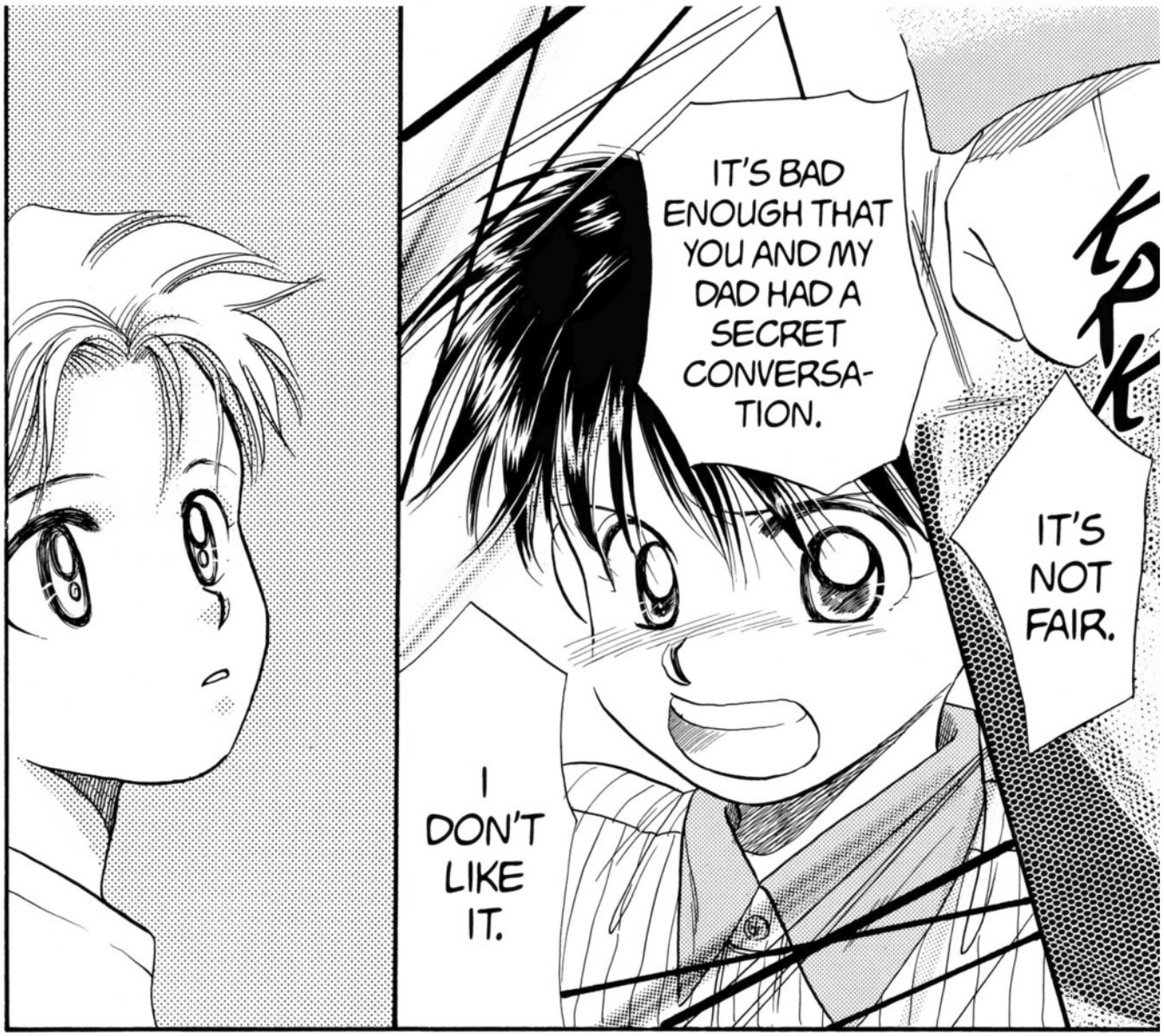
HUH? WHAT IS IT?


WHAT?
HEY?
THUMP

THAT WAS DIFFER-ENT!!
BUT YOU LOOKED AT THE PICTURES OF THOSE GIRLS THE OTHER DAY.
COMICS
HUH?
YOU...
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO LOOK AT STUFF LIKE THIS!!
WHY?!
ENOKI'S LOOKING AT ME.
DOES HE KNOW?
TAKUYA KNOWS NOTHING.
COMICS
?
!!
BLINK
HE KNOWS ...
BLUSH
KLUNK
HE KNOWS !!

TAKE-NAKA ?!
THUD
TAKE-NAKA!
WHAT ?!
SWOON
DIZZY
NURSE
IT'S SPRAINED.
YEAH?
ENO-KI...
WHUP
KLAK
LET HIM REST FOR A WHILE, THEN TAKE HIM BACK TO CLASS.
GLOOM
WELL, I HAVE TO GO NOW.

DID YOUR DAD...
...TELL YOU WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT?
NO.
YOU'RE LYING!!
YOU MUST KNOW!
THAT'S WHY YOU THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE THAT I WOULDN'T LOOK AT THAT PICTURE!!
TAKENAKA, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
NEVER MIND. YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIDE IT. EVEN IF YOU DO KNOW...
NURSE
GRR
TAKE-NAKA !!
WHO'S THE ONE WITH THE SECRET?! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!!
WHY ARE YOU MAD AT ME?
!!


IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT YOU AND MY DAD HAD A SECRET CONVERSATION.
IT'S NOT FAIR.
I DON'T LIKE IT.

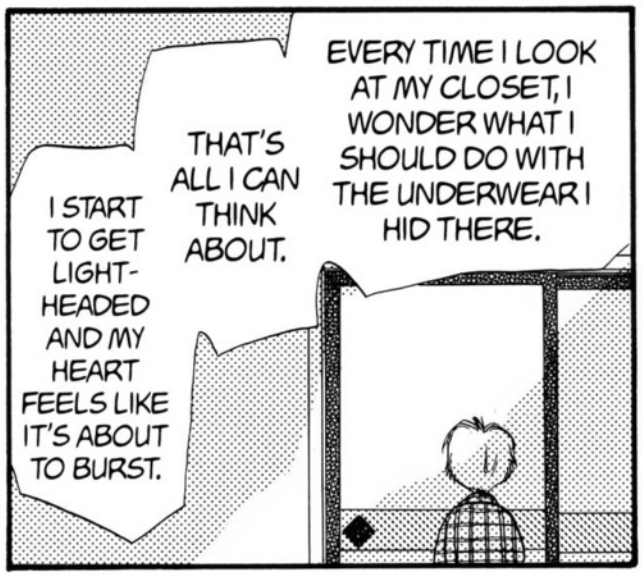
TAKENAKA ALWAYS WAS CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS.
I WAS REALLY WORRIED.
I...

OH.

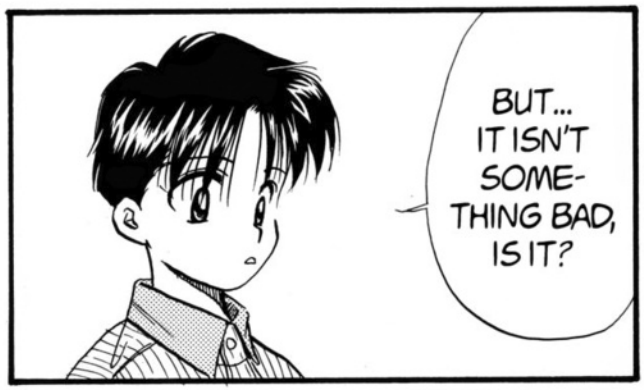
GASP
I-I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO...

THAT'S WHY I ASKED YOU IF IT WAS ALL RIGHT.
I GUESS I THOUGHT YOU COULD HANDLE IT.

YOU SEE ...
I...
I HAD... A WET DREAM.
AT FIRST ...
...I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS. I THOUGHT I WAS SICK.
I COULDN'T TALK TO MY MOM ABOUT IT.
BUT AFTER I TALKED TO YOUR DAD...
...I UNDER-STOOD WHAT IT WAS.
HE TOLD ME IT'S A NORMAL PHYSIOLOGICAL PHENOMENON.
LATELY...


EVERY TIME I LOOK AT MY CLOSET, I WONDER WHAT I SHOULD DO WITH THE UNDERWEAR I HID THERE.
THAT'S ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT.
I START TO GET LIGHT-HEADED AND MY HEART FEELS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO BURST.

I'VE BEEN FEELING GUILTY AND DISGUSTING.
...I WAS STARTING TO THINK I WAS EVIL.


BUT... IT ISN'T SOME-THING BAD, IS IT?

BUT IF THERE WAS SOMEONE AT HOME THAT I COULD TALK TO, I MIGHT NOT HAVE FELT SO BAD.

IN MY FAMILY, WHENEVER THERE'S A KISSING SCENE ON TV, SOMEONE CHANGES THE CHANNEL.

I...
I THINK THE WAY YOU REACT TO SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
... DEPENDS ON HOW YOU'VE BEEN RAISED.

ACTUALLY...

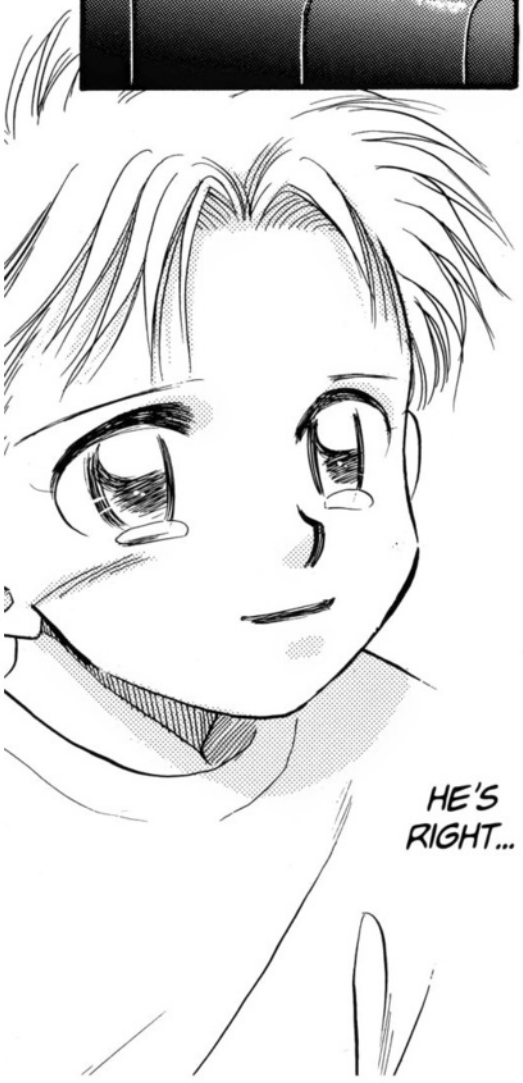
...HE WANTED TO TALK TO HIS OWN DAD.

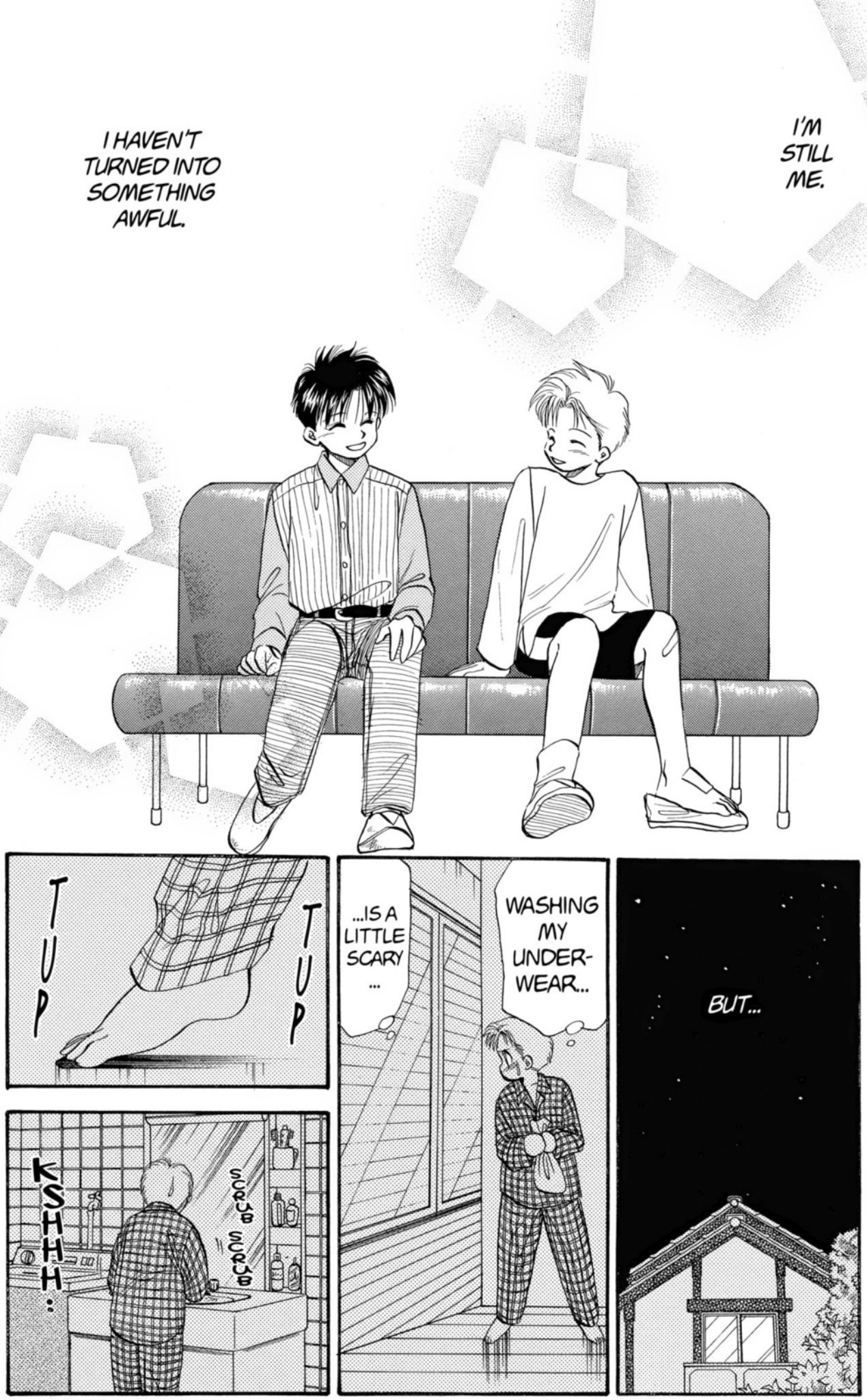
I THINK ...

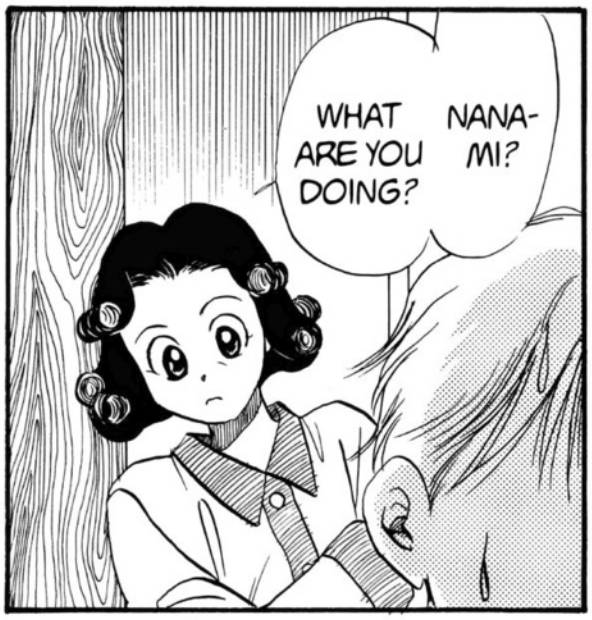
...TAKENAKA WAS WORRIED.

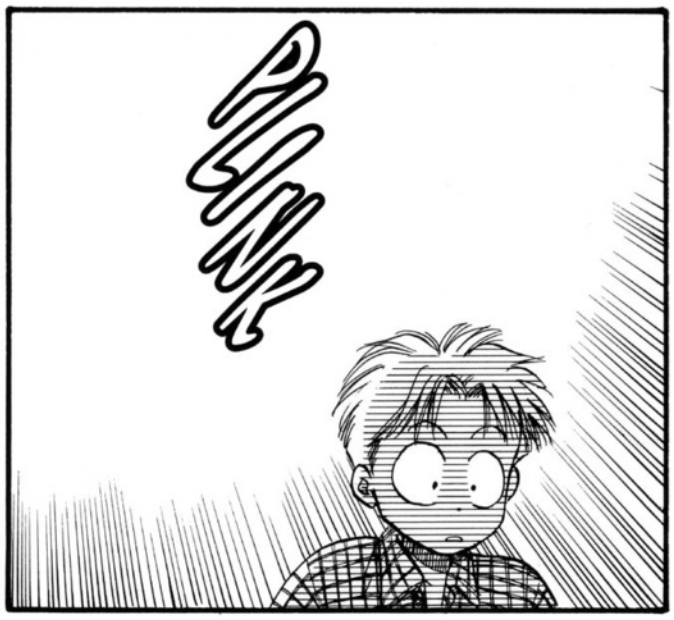
HE WAS REALLY WORRIED...

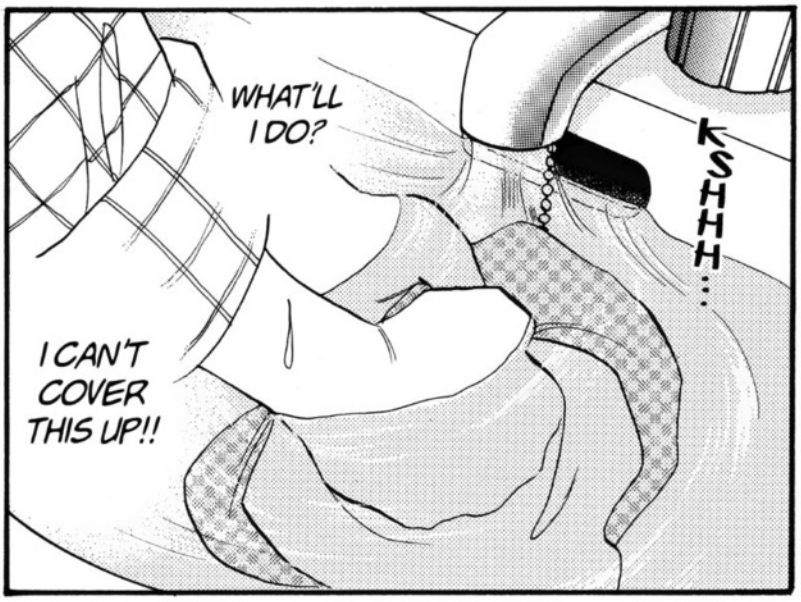
...AND HE HAD NO ONE TO TALK TO.




I HAVEN'T TURNED INTO SOMETHING AWFUL.
I'M STILL ME.
TUP
TUP
KSHHH:
SCRUB SCRUB
...IS A LITTLE SCARY ...
WASHING MY UNDER-WEAR...
BUT...


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
NANA-MI?

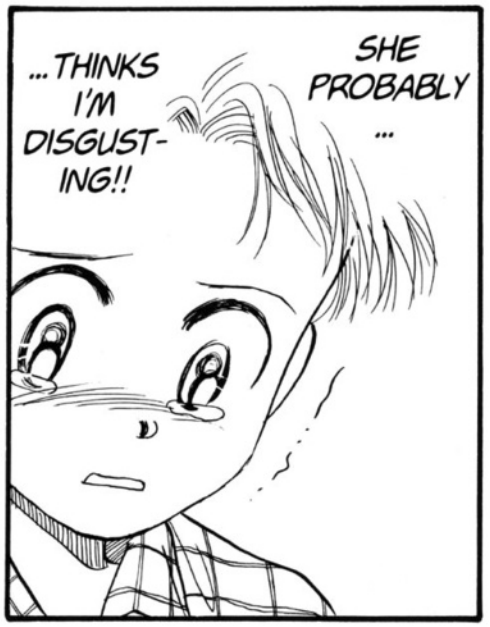

BLINK

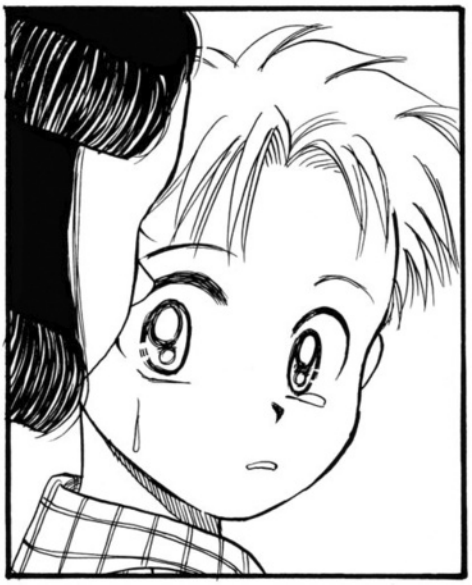

WHAT'LL I DO?
KSHHH...
I CAN'T COVER THIS UP!!

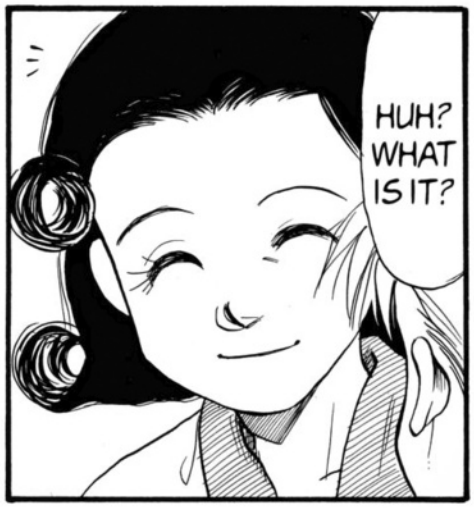
WHAT SHOULD I SAY?
UH...

OH...

IF I TURN AROUND ...
...SHE'LL BE LOOKING AT ME LIKE I'M A MONSTER !!


SHE PROBABLY ...
...THINKS I'M DISGUST-ING!!

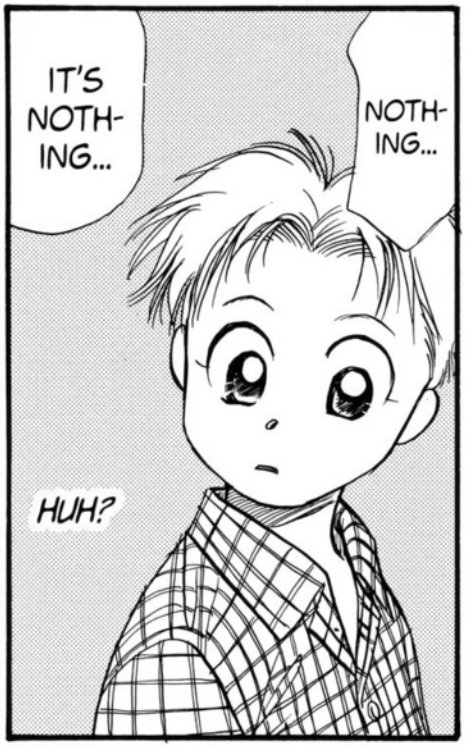



HUH? WHAT IS IT?

JUST PUT IT IN THE WASHING MACHINE. I'LL WASH IT TOMORROW.
LAUNDRY ?

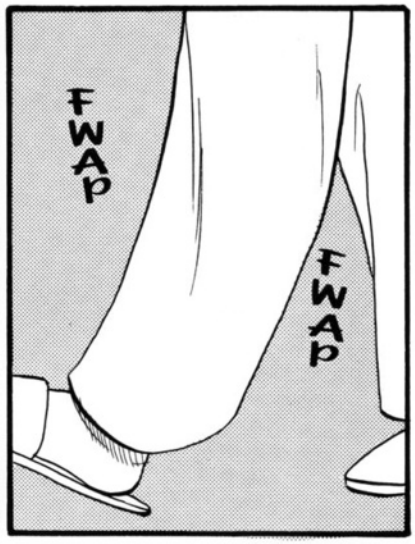
DON'T STAY UP TOO LATE.
DIDN'T SHE KNOW WHAT IT WAS?
FWAP
FWAP
DAZED...

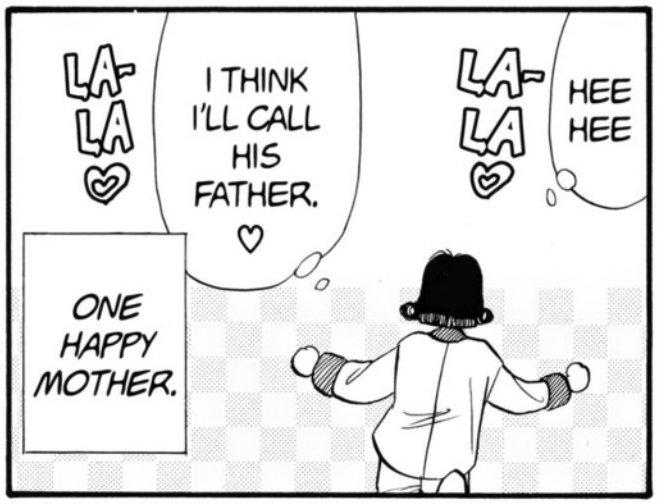
THAT WAS...
... PRETTY EASY.

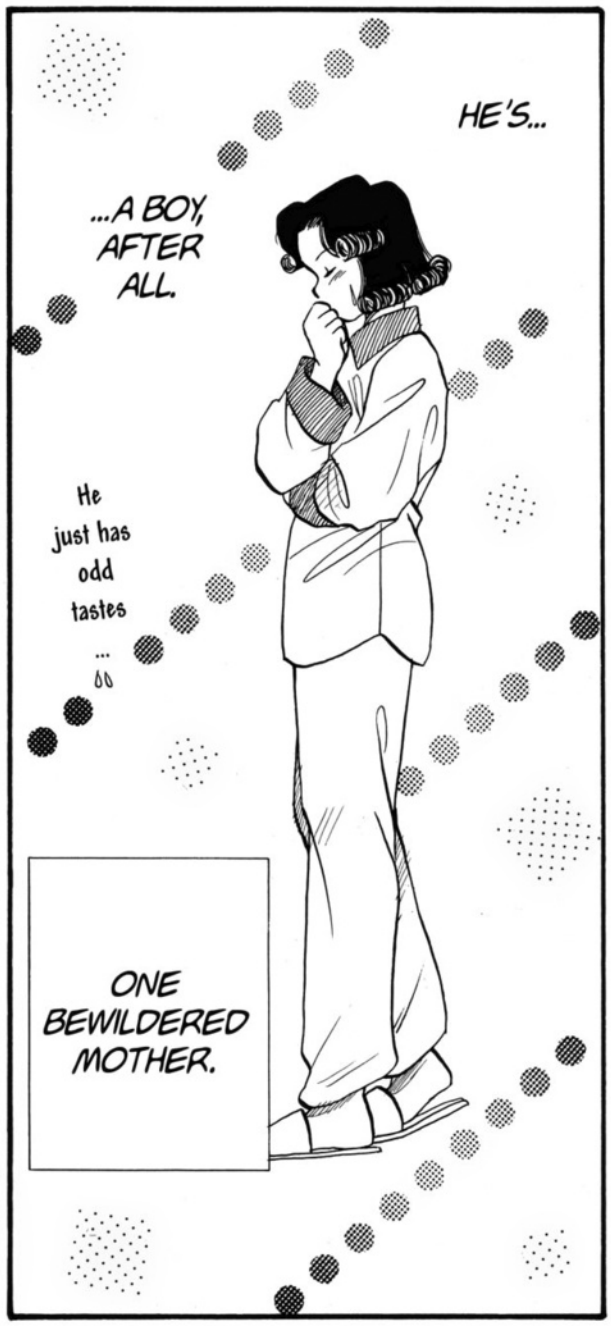

IT'S NOTH-ING...
NOTH-ING...
HUH?

HMM ...

FWAP
FWAP...


FWAP
FWAP


LA-LA ♡
I THINK I'LL CALL HIS FATHER. ♡
LA-LA ♡
HEE HEE
ONE HAPPY MOTHER.


HE'S...
...A BOY, AFTER ALL.
He just has odd tastes ... ♡
ONE BEWILDERED MOTHER.

THAT NIGHT, ACCORDING TO HIM...
SNUG
I SEE.
IT'S NOT SOME-THING YOU GET SCOLDED OVER.
...TAKENAKA HAD HIS FIRST GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP IN A WHILE.
SNUG

Chapter 56 / The End

Marimo Ragawa's Let Me Draw What I Want!

On December 28, 1994, a magnitude 6 earthquake hit Hachinohe City, where my parents' house is. I had just finished visiting them two days before the quake. How scary.

Takuya if he permed his hair and put on his angelic smile. He looks great.

Oh... I'm so sleepy! I'll go to sleep after I finish this.

In "Sketches from My Notebooks 3" in Volume 4 of Baby and Me, I used two characters that I planned to use in the future. I received several letters asking if that was Akama. It is. He's Ryuji Akama of Itsudemo Otenki Kibun (Always Feeling Sunny).

I'd really like to draw Takuya as a wild boy, like this, but I don't think my readers would go for it.

Today is December 31, 1994. To think I'm working on New Year's Eve... How pathetic! Tomorrow is New Year's Day, but I'll probably still be working.

Tomoko looking elegant. It's fun to draw pretty girls.

Minoru when he was tiny.

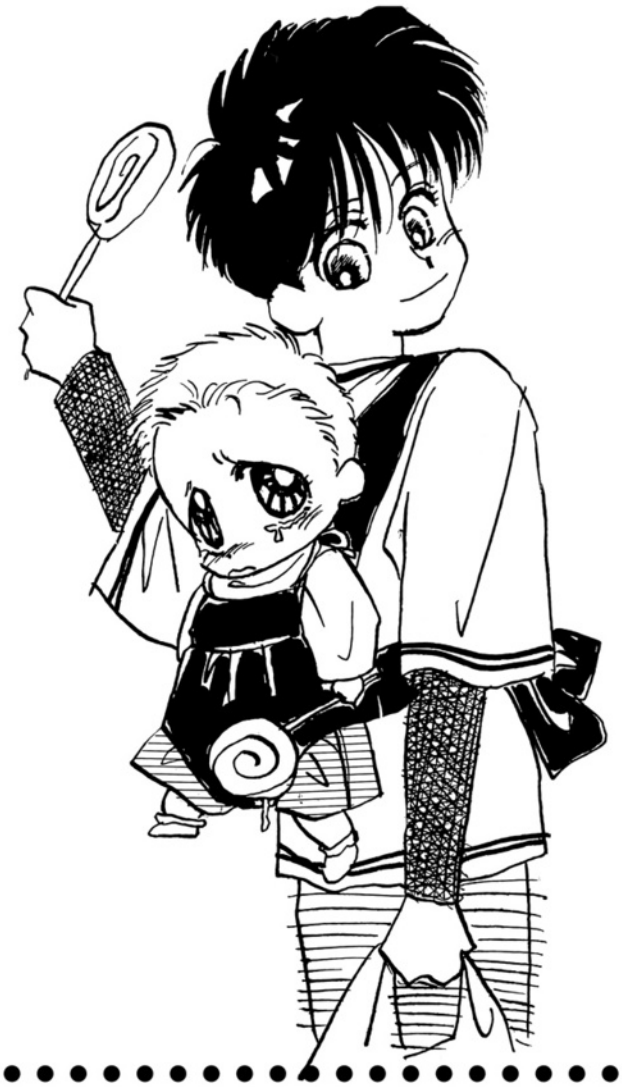
Ubb?

My goal for this year is to take a trip with my assistants. I hope we can do it. Okay, assistants--work! Work! Heh heh heh

This year I'm going to see the musicals I Love Botchan in March 2000 and Cats in May!!

I want to see Carousel too.

Marimo Ragawa's
Let Me Draw What I Want!
Oh! I barely have an hour. The deadline for my next graphic novel is near!! I have to finish this up quickly.
An unusually serene Akihiro Fujii.
Hakusen Publishing Co.
The Baby and Me Collection I Flipped My Toy Box Over: 1,600 yen. Please go and buy it!!
Sales pitch
My sister asked me why Fujii's so popular, but even I don't know. I don't think he's especially handsome, and his name is very ordinary. Hmm... I'd like to draw someone who's really full of himself.
Seiichi Kimura and his family are very popular. It's probably because they're all regular people and easy to identify with, don't you think?
Hmph.
Edomae and Omori. I don't have many female characters, but Ms. Omori is delightful.
A word of thanks... I received countless letters of condolence about Yoshizo. Some actually made me cry. I won't be able to answer most of your letters, but please know that I am reading all of them. I hope you'll all continue to give me your support. Thank you.
Oh...
A somewhat disconcerting look at the back of Minoru's head.
Minowu
Bye-bye.
After I said in Volume 9 that no one would buy any Baby and Me character merchandise, I got mail from people saying, "I'd buy it!!" It seems there will be some coming out in the spring of 1995. (To be announced...)
At my workplace, he's known as "Seiichi of the layered look."
If there are any illustrations you'd like me to put on this page, just let me know. It doesn't have to be something from Baby and Me. I'll draw anything from a foreigner to someone from the Meiji period. Write it somewhere in your letter.
Marimo



BABY & ME

Creator: Marimo Ragawa

SBM Title: *Baby & Me*

Date of Birth: September 21

Blood Type: B

Major Works: *Time Limit*, *Baby & Me*, *N.Y. N.Y.*, and *Shanimuni-Go* (Desperately—Go)

Marimo Ragawa first started submitting manga to a comic magazine when she was 12 years old. She kept up her submissions for four years, but to no avail. She decided to submit her work to the magazine *Hana to Yume*, where she received Top Prize in the Monthly Manga Contest as well as an honorable mention (Kasaku) in the magazine's Big Challenge contest. Her first manga was titled *Time Limit*. *Baby & Me* was honored with a Shogakukan Manga Award in 1995 and was spun off into an anime.

Ragawa's work showcases some very cute and expressive line work along with an incredible ability to depict complex emotions and relationships. Some of her other works include *N.Y. N.Y.* and the tennis manga *Shanimuni-Go*.

Ragawa has two brothers and two sisters.

BABY & ME, Vol. 10

The Shojo Beat Manga Edition

Story & Art by

MARIMO RAGAWA

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Translation/JN Productions
Touch-up Art & Lettering/Vanessa Satone
Design/Yuki Ameda
Editor/Shaenon K. Garrity

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Editor in Chief, Magazines/Marc Weidenbaum
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